
THE
SONG OF SOLOMON
PARAPHRASED:

WITH
A COMMENTARY,

AND
NOTES CRITICAL AND PRACTICAL.

[PRICE 2s. 6d. sewed.]

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THE
SONG OF SOLOMON
PART I

WITH
A COMMENTARY

AND
NOTES CRITICAL AND PRACTICAL

[Price as above.]

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SONG OF SOLOMON

PARAPHRASED:

WITH AN

INTRODUCTION,

CONTAINING

Some REMARKS on a late New Translation of this
SACRED POEM;

A L S O,

A COMMENTARY,

A N D

NOTES CRITICAL AND PRACTICAL.

[Written in the Year 1769.]

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M,DCC,LXXV.

THE
SONG OF SOLOMON

PARAPHRASED

INTRODUCTION

BY
SACRED FORM

A COMMENTARY

NOTES CRITICAL AND EXPLANATORY

BY
J. H. W. ...

To the RIGHT REVEREND
DR ROBERT LOWTH,
BISHOP of OXFORD.

MY LORD,

THO' the Author and the Publisher of this little ESSAY will probably be ever unknown to your Lordship, yet the design of the WORK being to illustrate one of the finest pieces of the Hebrew Poetry, and the Publication intended to assist real merit, it is hoped your Lordship will not be offended at seeing yourself thus publickly address'd without your leave being first asked. If the WORK meets with your Lordship's approbation, it need not fear obtaining that of the valuable part of the learned world; and it will certainly be a satisfaction to yourself
to

to think you are, even without design,
adding one good Work more to those you
have already done for Mankind, by your
very learned Performances. I am with
all due regard,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's most obedient,

Most humble servant,

Edin. March 15.

1775.

THE AUTHOR.

THE Reader is desired to observe, that the New Translation remarked upon in the following Introduction and Notes, is published by an anonymous author, and printed in London, for R. and J. Dodsley in Pall-mall, *anno* 1764.

OBSERVE also that the two capital letters A. B. are, for brevity sake, made use of to express the Author of Observations on divers Passages of Scripture, &c. See note, p. 9. And the letters C. D. stand for Dr Gill's Explanation of this divine Song.

E R R A T A.

Page 10. Line 16. For learned read learning.

- | | |
|------|--|
| 32. | 24. <i>For vol. read verse.</i> |
| 46. | 5. <i>For VI. 2. read V. 2.</i> |
| 49. | 22. <i>For while read which.</i> |
| 62. | <i>ult. read a chief.</i> |
| 72. | 21. <i>read we see.</i> |
| 79. | — <i>For note 45. read 46.</i> |
| 102. | 24. <i>read nor</i> אפריון |
| 106. | 22. <i>For various read serious.</i> |
| 112. | 10. <i>For or read and.</i> |
| 115. | <i>penult. For look read lock.</i> |
| 118. | 14. <i>read protections.</i> |
| 137. | 3. <i>after which, insert double commas. "</i> |
| 143. | 21. <i>For 64. read 67.</i> |
| 175. | 12. <i>read desintereffement.</i> |

The double commas in the introduction, containing quotations from the New Translation, are sometimes misplaced: but the sense is not otherwise affected thereby. And so likewise, p. 79. ch. I. 1. they are put to the text instead of the Paraphrase.

Errors in pointing, which do not hurt the sense, the intelligent reader will correct for himself.

REV^D. and DEAR SIR,

AS you know I was ever a great admirer of the Poetical Books of Scripture, and particularly of the SONG of SOLOMON, you may suppose I was pleased with hearing of a New Translation of that Book; and, as I am always ready to trust you with my thoughts on every interesting subject, I shall make no apology for troubling you with the following pages, which had never been wrote, if the author, whose work I have sent you, had not led the way, and suggested thoughts, which brought on others, and opened my eyes to see beauties, which had before escaped me : For all which I am much obliged.

BUT tho' this New Translation of Canticles illustrates several passages, and may, upon the whole, be of great use to such as seek for instruction, it is, however, to my apprehension, both defective and faulty in several respects : *Defective*, in that the author runs into loose paraphrases, and departs widely from received interpretations, without explaining sufficiently, either the difficulties in the text, or the authorities on which he proceeds ; see chap. VI. 4, 5, 9, 12, 13 ; chap. VII. 6, 12 ; chap. VIII. 5 ;—*faulty*, in that, intending to clear this beautiful Poem from the false charge of indecency, he himself gives fresh occasion for that charge ; see p. 19. and 20. of Introduction ;

duction; 23. 25. 28. 32. 34. of the Commentary; and p. 56. 57. 72. 75. 76. 83. 85. of Annotations.

BUT I do not mean to be severe upon the author. To understand, and thoroughly taste the delicate expressions of this inimitable Poem would require the chaste ideas of an angel, with a tenderness even passing the love of women; by which expression of David's I understand that love which women feel, not that which is felt for them; for there is certainly a degree of tenderness, a delicacy of sentiment, and, I think, a chastity and innocency, in the dispositions of a woman, whose ideas have not been sullied by improper books, or foolish conversations, of which men have generally no notion. The unbounded licentiousness of this and many other ages has made it almost impossible for men to come any thing towards years of discretion, without such a knowledge of vice, in theory at least, as must render them incapable of a proper command over their imaginations; for want of which they are ever inclined to indulge a ludicrous wantonness of expression, whenever such subjects as this are to be considered; and therefore, notwithstanding their improved education, tho' carried even as far as the knowledge of the original language, they are most unfit to render, with suitable tenderness and delicacy, the sentiments of a virgin-bridegroom, such as Solomon probably was when he wrote this beautiful Poem: and they are still more unfit to express the love of God, which passes all knowledge; of
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Christ, the heavenly Bride-groom, whom Solomon in this Poem is certainly meant to represent. The other sex, besides the disadvantages under which they labour from want of the original and other languages, which they seldom understand, have in themselves several dispositions, which prevent their entering into the useful instructions conveyed in this Poem, even where the chastity and tenderness above-mentioned is found. The characteristic of the bride in this Poem is humility; and I need not say how contrary to that amiable disposition is the whole turn of female education. If we tell our daughters that woman was made for man, (for an help-mate for him, I mean, not for a mere instrument of his pleasure,) they laugh; and if we put them in mind that their glory is to obey, they think within themselves how common it is for the passions or weaknesses of men to invert this rule. The eastern ladies indeed, and the women among savage nations, know what subjection is: but then they know it not under its proper restraint; they are slaves, most abjectly so, in many respects; and from the shameful accounts we read of their behaviour under such circumstances, we form very false ideas of female subjection, and are most unfit to enter into the delicate touches in the characters of the bride and bridegroom of the Canticles; where the dignity of the husband is kept up with the greatest tenderness of affection; and the submission of the wife is joined with the confidence of friend.

friendship. No wonder therefore that this book has been so frequently misunderstood and misrepresented ; and that this author in particular, to whom I acknowledge myself and the world, notwithstanding, much obliged, should have been too much influenced by the prejudices of others, as well as his own : but so it is. One striking instance of this we find in an expression, on which he seems to dwell with pleasure ; I mean pages 32. and 34. of the Introduction, “ her virgin airs laid aside.”—Does he then, like the looser part of his sex, and too many others, who should be more candid ; does he, I say, consider the modest distresses of a young innocent maiden, unconscious, not only of guilt, but of every loose incitement to it, as the effect of art and affectation ? Can any thing be more cruel and unjust than such a supposition ? How many modest brides, like her in the Canticles, have wished that the object of their tender affections were any thing to them but a lover, that they might shew their fondness and esteem without restraint, and not be suspected of any wanton disposition, or impatience to try the married state. I will not say what the practice of vice may produce, nor what ideas may be forced upon a young mind, by novels and indecent plays ; but I am persuaded, where the natural disposition is chaste, (which, I believe, it commonly is,) and where the education has been modest, a woman gives the most generous proof of esteem and affection of which human nature is capable, when
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she puts herself into the power of an husband: And how must the delicacy and tenderness of such a mind be shocked, if she thinks herself suspected of art and dissimulation, and an endeavour to conceal a wanton disposition; and finds that the unkind thought arises from a looseness of carriage in the person, to whose will she has subjected herself, and in whom she expected to find nothing but kindness, confidence and protection? The Author of the book of Canticles, (for Solomon, as the rest of the Prophets, was only the instrument,) the Author, I say, was not a man, but he who judges right; not from appearances, nor from any irregular motion in his own breast, as man does, but who knows the inmost thoughts of his frail imperfect creatures, and has expressed them with the most delicate touches of nature: And I think one among many proofs of the Scriptures having a divine original, is, their being every where so entirely free from every prejudice of time, country, age, sex, or way of life; whereas such prejudices are found in every human composition.

BUT while we justify the bride in the Canticles from art and affectation, let her not be left charged with indelicacy of expression, on account of the simple plainness of her language, nor let a force be put upon her words, to bring them to suit with our ideas. I would make it a rule in this book to take every word in the most modest sense it will bear, because I believe that was the sense intended: Yet
that

that must not be carried so far, as to give a forced sense to every expression, which appears to us indecent, or which does not sound well in our language. Allowance must be made for the simplicity of ancient times, when modesty was in their thoughts and actions; and things harmless in themselves were spoken of without offence: Whereas with us chastity is too often confined to our words only; and we are therefore more cautious in our expressions, because a wanton imagination is ever ready to turn them to a bad sense. When Ezekiel describes the helpless state of Jerusalem under the image of a new born babe, &c. he uses words which raise a blush in the reader, because he exposes the infirmities of human nature in a manner not usual with us: Yet one cannot say there is a wanton expression in that whole account. The ideas may be displeasing, but they are noways unchaste in themselves; and if the reader finds any such arise in his mind upon reading that chapter, the Song of Solomon, or a few other passages in Scripture, he must own, if candidly disposed, that such ideas were already in his mind; and he might probably trace their origin to the heathen poets. Nature, for wise and very obvious reasons, has implanted stronger passions in one sex than in the other: But it is great pity that the education of men should add strength to these, instead of administering arms to subdue them. Man from the beginning was intended to be confined to one wife, as
 appears

appears from the first institution of marriage: And, if scripture did not point it out, reason ought; for by the proportion of births and deaths among the sexes, it is plain, that, if one woman only is allotted to each man, there will still be a deficiency of the female sex. For this reason, in countries where polygamy has prevailed, the equality has been preserved by an infamous practice, condemned, discouraged, and, I think, absolutely forbid by the law of Moses. It is true, the Hebrews were allowed to have more than one wife: But it does not appear to have been a prevailing custom. Moses, (says the Son of God,) allowed it for the hardness of their hearts; and I suppose we may add, also on account of the bad examples they were surrounded with; and because of the advantage arising, (by the conversion of female slaves), towards increasing a nation designed to be numerous as the sand; and for spreading the true religion among heathen nations. If man then was designed to be confined to one wife, he ought certainly to be taught that chastity is a necessary virtue, and highly to be revered. Women grow old much sooner than men; many accidents may oblige a separation; the law of God enjoins it in several circumstances; nay nature itself points out the same; so that, upon the whole, a great reverence for chastity, and a command over the passions is necessary for every man who would live according to the will of God, and the dictates of reason, even in a married state.

But

But, on the contrary, a modern education seems calculated to add strength to the corruption of mankind; and a loose indulgence in thoughts, words, and actions, is accounted the privilege of the wiser and more excellent sex. However criminal Solomon became in his old age, it is probable he was educated in a very different manner; was instructed in the law of God; and still retained the simplicity and innocency of his youth at the time this poem was wrote: And therefore no unchaste meaning must be given to his words; but they must ever be taken in the plain obvious sense, as the effusions of an heart indulging the first motions of an innocent tender passion. If it be objected that this could not be Solomon's first espousals because Pharaoh's daughter was his first wife; and that this could not be her, on account of her being represented as a simple shepherdes, as having led a laborious life, been under oppression, &c. and because there is mention of a mother as present through the whole scene of action; let it be remembered that the whole is supposed here to be a poetic fiction, though celebrating a real marriage, and in a manner not unsuitable to the manners of the times; so that though the mother of the bride might be as far off as Egypt, yet, with great propriety, and with pleasure to the bride, she might be represented as present at the nuptials. But, after all, it is not positively said in Scripture that Pharaoh's daughter was the first bride of Solomon, though it seems probable she was, as will

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will appear, I think, to any one that considers the several texts where she is mentioned. See Note 17.

BUT to return to the author of the New Translation : The chief thing, I think, which has misled him, is too much regard for the accounts given of the customs of the modern Jews, and too much attention to the manners of the Arabs and other eastern nations. It is certain, from a consideration of these, several things in the Scripture may be cleared up ; but undoubtedly both this author, and another late writer [* 1.] have carried comparisons of this sort much too far. Let it be considered that Asia is an extent of country at least five times greater than Europe ; that it is inhabited by a great variety of nations, amongst whom, as well as in other parts of the world, the modern Jews are dispersed ; that the whole face of the country has, at different periods, been overturned, which must necessarily have introduced a great change of manners : I will, as to modern times, mention only the great revolutions occasioned in the seventh century by the followers of Mahomet ; and those almost as great, and yet more sudden, in the twelfth, by the Tartars under Gengis

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* 1. Author of Observations on divers passages of Scripture, placing many of them in a light altogether new, grounded on circumstances, &c. Printed for T. Field, London, 1764.

and his descendents : So that, instead of judging of the manners of the antient Hebrews, near three thousand years ago, from those of the modern Jews or eastern nations, it should be matter of surprise to find so many of the customs mentioned in Scripture yet retained. We must not therefore suppose a resemblance where there is none, or an entire sameness of manners in other respects, because some few lines may be traced ; especially where the modern customs have in them any thing indecent or barbarous, or seem in any way offensive to modesty, gentleness of manners or politeness, great traces of all which we find in the transactions related in the Bible, tho' joined with a becoming simplicity.

WHAT has the marriage of Solomon to do with the infamous practice of the Jews of Galilee, who (in the most antient times) were particularly noted for being intermixed with the heathen nations among whom they dwelt and learned their manners ? Is there the least word in this whole Poem, except the perverted passage in the sixth Eclogue, to countenance such an unnatural practice as is mentioned, page 19 ? Concerning this very place, the author owns, page 32. that it is not evident whether the words upon which he builds, belong to the bride-maids, or to the sons of the bride-chamber ; and if they do not evidently appear to belong to the latter, I humbly think it very absurd to introduce speakers, (no where else mentioned through the whole poem,) only to countenance

nance an indecent supposition; especially as he allows, page 17. that "A striking difference may be observed between the marriage rites occasionally mentioned in the Gospel, and those observed by the Jews at present." Several marriages are recorded in the Old Testament; but in no one of them is there the least appearance of such a custom as the author supposes; in some there are positive proofs of the contrary. Jacob's marriage with Leah in particular supposes such silence, modesty and privacy, as might be an example to Christians. As for the passage, Deut. XXII. 15. &c. there is no proof that the fact was to "be made known in the most public and notorious manner;" p. 28. Such testimony was only admitted where a woman's reputation, and her life even was at stake: And besides, it is not likely that such a trial as is there mentioned should often, if ever, happen; because, if the charge was false, the accusing husband exposed himself to punishment. The proceeding there required, is a direct proof that no such witnesses, as the author supposes, were admitted by the antient Hebrews; for else recourse would certainly have been ordered to be had to their testimony; nay, it seems plain, that even the parents of the bride were not present where this author can be content to introduce the young companions of the bridegroom; for *they* are not called upon to give testimony to a matter of fact as witnesses, but to produce such tokens as they had received, most probably

ly from the husband, with an acknowledgment that he had found their daughter pure and chaste ; a testimony, from which if he afterwards went back, and publicly slandered his wife, he deserved to be punished severely. Observe also that the supposed admittance of the companions is placed five days after the marriage. The case, in short, with regard to marriage seems to be this : As it was instituted in the state of innocence, and God himself was pleased to bestow the parental benediction, it is probable that even then it was an instituted emblem of the love of God to his creatures, with whom, from the first, he condescended to enter into covenant. Though the corruption introduced by the fall of man degraded all his actions ; yet still, as the married state was to be the means of preserving the human race, and the source of all the comforts of society, it was fit to keep up the dignity of it ; and therefore the glorious privileges allowed it from the first were not recalled ; and, when the law was given, the holiness of its institution was fenced with a peculiar care. For this reason severe laws were made against the violators of chastity ; and the virgin that willingly suffered herself to be polluted was punished with death : So were the adulterers and adulteresses, even where the woman was only betrothed to an husband ; only where they were slaves, their lives were spared, as being the property of the master. But this was not all : the good name of her who was to represent the spouse

spouse of Christ, was carefully to be preserved. For this reason, the man who married a virgin, did, (probably in the presence of her parents, or other proper witnesses,) acknowledge, as the bridegroom in the Canticles seems to do, that he had received her pure and undefiled; for though this ceremony is not mentioned in any other place of Scripture, yet, as is before observed, the passage, Deut. XXII. supposes it. But, whether it were so or not, the severe sentence on the woman, (if found guilty,) commanded in this place; and the punishment of the man, if a slanderer, shew the extreme care taken to vindicate the honour of women before marriage. Their good names were also to be preserved after marriage with the utmost care; and therefore, in case of any jealous suspicion, the Almighty was pleased to interpose by a miracle, and, where no other means could be found to clear up the matter, himself to punish the guilty, and to clear the innocent; leaving the jealous husband, in this latter case, to the reproaches of his own conscience; probably because inflicting any punishment on him would deter men from seeking for a method of trial so much for the advantage of the woman; and besides, that his fault was not voluntary, as in the former case, when, after owning he had received a virgin to wife, he brought up an evil report against her. I am sensible people may amuse themselves in starting more questions on this subject, all very needless, and which may all be thus answered;

ed ; That God, who vouchsafed to protect the innocent in one case, would probably take care to vindicate such in every other circumstance. The mention of the text in this place was only to shew how unfit it is for the purpose for which the author quotes it.

ANOTHER indelicacy in the author's account of this Poem amazes me in a person of so much taste. It is page 20. where he supposes the watchmen, mentioned chap. v. 9. to be the eunuchs of the palace ; and to be impowered " in antient times (because " they are so in the seraglios at present) to give their " lovely mistresses a stripe or two." There is an express provision, Exod. xxi. 8. as to a woman sold by her father ; and Deut. xxi. 14. as to a captive taken in war : That such, when taken to wife, shall no longer be considered as slaves ; if they please not, they shall go free. What comparison can we then make between Hebrew wives, who were commonly free born, (to say nothing of Solomon's wives, who were princesses,) and the female slaves of an eastern monarch, which are bought and sold at pleasure ? Besides it does not appear from Scripture, that the manners of the Hebrews with regard to women, anywise resembled those of the modern Tures or Indian Nabobs : Even virgins might rejoice in the dance : We find Deborah, a prophetess, going with the army ; Abigail, a woman of quality, coming out to meet David : The Shunamite, a great woman, going
openly

openly with a man-servant to the Prophet : And, in short, there is not the least sign of that jealous disposition, so notorious amongst the modern eastern nations, nor any of its consequences to be observed through the accounts of the Hebrew nation, even down to the times of the gospel, through a series of two thousand years and more. And in particular those infamous instruments of tyranny, so common now in the east, were probably unknown among the Hebrews, unless perhaps under some of the worst of their kings. But let us allow all that the author imagines to be true, and that things, such as he supposes, did really happen ; can he believe, that the wise, the elegant, the polite king Solomon, would entertain the public, or his beloved bride, in a poem wrote to celebrate their loves, with an account of her indiscreet behaviour, and the chastisement she had received for it ? It brings to my mind a traveller's relation of a king among the Moors of Barbary, who, having chopped off his wife's hands, used to insult over her misfortune, bidding her kill the lice with which he swarmed : Which nasty account the reader may take for a sample of the manners of those filthy people, from whose ways of living the customs of the antient Hebrews are in some things attempted to be explained by this author, and by the author of *Observations*, &c. mentioned above, p. 9.

ANOTHER, and a fundamental mistake, I think this author has been led into by his attention to the manners

ners of modern eastern nations, and of the nations over-run by the Moors and Mahometans; which is placing the scene of the Poem in the inclosure of Solomon's palace, and supposing the pastoral descriptions to be a sort of mask actually performed: All which, I think, degrades the divine Poem, and takes off from its lovely simplicity. That it is a kind of Drama, a [*2.] pastoral dialogue, I readily allow:

But

* 2. A. B. objects, page 2. to its being called a pastoral, "Because, in one verse, or, it may be, two, Cant. i. 4. 12. we find an allusion to their employments, "must we therefore, says he, look upon the bride "and bridegroom as shepherds throughout?" Indeed, I think, we must, when the Poet, at the first appearance of his characters, describes them as leading each a flock; and continues, through the poem, to speak of them in the same manner, can we want to be told, that the whole is a pastoral? That Christ is a Shepherd, a King, and a Bridegroom, we find to be expressed every where in Scripture; his type is therefore so also. But, confining ourselves only to the literal sense, we cannot be at a loss either in sacred or prophane authors for examples of the united character of King and Shepherd. Besides, the whole would, I think, be unintelligible without this fiction. What, for example, can be understood by the word *feeding*, so often made use of? Can Solomon be supposed to feed himself among the lillies? Must not the first use of the word, chap. i. 7. explain it throughout? Can the notion of a modern eastern monarch suit with

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But that the actions described were literally performed, either in real life, or as a mask or sportful representation, seems highly improbable. [*3.] Let it be remembered that David, the father of Solomon, was taken from the sheepfold, as Saul was from the herd; that Homer describes kings, and other poets, even the gods, as sharers in rural cares; that every Hebrew was in fact a shepherd or husband-man, as

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leaping on the mountains as a roe? with standing, looking in, inviting the bride to come forth, directing the companions to take care of the vineyards? Can her speech, her going alone to seek him, finding him, bringing him to her mother, be accounted for as the new translator and A. B. have attempted it? Can Solomon, unless in the character of a Shepherd, be supposed to come, (alone, as far as appears,) in the night, exposed to the dew; to pass on as far as the bride's door; to speak to her, and she to him, without any attendants being mentioned; to complain, when there, of his situation, 'till his bride herself arises to let him in, &c.? Does gathering the fruit of the palm-tree, the myrrh, &c. attending the vines and pomegranates, belong to a King? Do the stores of fruits new and old, the meeting a brother in the street, with many other expressions, suit Solomon or his bride in any view but the assumed Pastoral character? I cannot think it. But admit the whole to be a poetic fiction, and the scenes become not only natural but delightful.

* 3. See Note 107.

the Patriarchs, from whom they sprang, had been before them ; and that such employments were in antient times universally accounted honourable : And we shall find reason enough, (even setting aside the prophetic meaning of the book,) to account for Solomon's chusing to celebrate his first espousals under the united character of a Shepherd and a King, giving the object of his love the part of a simple shepherdess, chosen by him among thousands, and preferred before the queens and concubines placed within his power, according to the state of an eastern monarch, but not as yet taken to his bed, he being, as himself says, a child, probably not more than fifteen years of age, when he came to the throne. The book therefore, in its plain literal dress, seems to be a Poem of Solomon's on his first espousals, [*4.] expressing, under an agreeable fiction, his chaste love for his beautiful bride ; and her charms, her humble simplicity of manners, and tender affection for him. Some have objected to Solomon's praising himself : But this, I own, gives me no offence ; for, besides that we see from Homer, and other authors, that the artless sincerity of antient times admitted of such expressions, it was impossible for Solomon to do justice to his bride, without putting

* 4. A. B. p. 45. allows that the first wife, and not the mother of the eldest son, is always in the east considered as Queen, and as such, distinguished above all the rest.

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ting in her mouth such expressions, as, in those countries, and in those times, were natural and becoming the tenderness and humble subjection of a wife. It is true, the manners described seem to be rather those of times preceeding that of Solomon; but this, considering him only as a poet, seems a judicious choice, for scenes familiar to the eye are the less pleasing; and the choice of time and place being unconfin'd in a poem leaves more room for the ornaments of fancy; yet still, I suppose, (with the present translator,) that the manners and customs of the Hebrews are all along attended to and expressed. I think his division of this Poem into seven Eclogues, and the subject he ascribes to each, upon the whole, very probable; [* 5.] and his description of the bridal pavilion most beautiful, setting in a clear light one of the most difficult passages in the book: But in several passages, (besides those already mentioned,) I must beg leave to differ from him; and shall therefore, for my own instruction, and that of others who may desire it, take what I approve in his performance, and form out of it a new description of the Poem, and a paraphrase after my own manner; making

* 5. The first hint of this he ascribes to Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux, who has been followed by Dr Lowth, Bishop of Oxford, and others. It is not a necessary consequence to suppose, as they have done, that each day is distinguished by some particular ceremony,

ing no apology for my presumption, but trusting to the candour of my readers; the honesty and simplicity of my intentions being, I hope, well known to those, for whose sakes I chiefly write.

THE Poem describes several particulars of the loves of Solomon "and some very beautiful person, " who is called Shulamith," [*6.] or the bride of Solomon. It celebrates no loose amours, but that holy wedded love, which allowably glows in the chastest bosom. The form of this Poem is dramatic, as appears from the changes of address, which occur in every page. [†7.] And tho' in the Hebrew copies

* 6. "*Shulamith* is derived from *Solomon*, as *Charlotte* " is from *Charles*."

† 7. Tho' every pastoral dialogue be in its own nature a kind of drama, yet the abuse from thence brought on as to stage-representations, is so offensive, that I am sorry to give this divine Poem a theatrical air, by describing the situation of the persons in what may look like scenes, and saying, The Bride comes forwards, or, the Bridegroom enters, &c. all which, to an eastern reader, would, I suppose, be unnecessary, and was therefore omitted: But I was afraid the English reader, without such helps, would not attend fully to the propriety of every part of the dialogue, where time and place are certainly very often shifted. I would wish the reader, after taking a cursory view of the whole, as here set down, to leave out all I have wrote, and give the

copies the several speeches are distinguished by no external marks, there can be no more doubt that such a change of address was intended by the poet, than, if we were to meet with a scene of Terence's written without the names of the interlocutors, we should be at a loss to pronounce it dramatic, or to trace out the different changes of the dialogue. These are the more easily ascertained in the present case, as the Hebrew language is exceedingly accurate in distinguishing persons, having masculine and feminine terminations of their verbs and pronouns; so that *Thee* or *Thou* are different, when addressed to a man and a woman; and in *Thou lovest*, it is known by the final syllable whether the person spoken to is male or female. [*8.]

It

the Poem a more serious review, attending carefully to its own native beauties, and to the useful instructions it contains; for in the character of an humble modest wife is here represented that of a true Christian.

* 8. This is for the most part very true; yet I believe all the languages, where difference of genders is used, admit of particular exceptions, and feminine terminations are used sometimes with masculine nouns, and masculine with feminine; as in French, *le couleur de rose*, even though *rose* and *couleur*, when separate, are both feminine; *sa Majesté*, *sa Sainteté*, said of the King and the Pope: So in Hebrew; *Coheleth* with a feminine termination, is used for King Solomon the preacher; and

It is evident then that the Poem is a dialogue, and that there are several speakers; which are the Bridegroom, the Bride, and the Virgins, her companions.

THAT the Poem does not consist of one single undivided dialogue, but is broken into several parts, will appear evidently to any one who shall consult, in any version, chap. ii. 7. 8. chap. iii. 5. 6. chap. vi. 10. 11. chap. viii. 4. 5. &c. In one place the morning is described, in another noon or night. Sometimes the adventures of the present day are recounted, and sometimes we have a recital of what happened the day preceding. One while we are in the Bride's apartment; another time among the shepherds tents. It was from considering all these particulars, and finding that the Poem naturally broke into seven parts, that an eminent French critic [* 9.] very happily conjectured that it might possibly describe the seven days of the nuptial solemnity; and his discovery is the basis of the present attempt. [† 10.]

It and Christ, the wisdom of God, is spoken of in the book of Proverbs, with all the feminine words agreeing with the word *wisdom*, and the character of a woman; and probably many other examples might be produced, if Hebrew books were as common as French, and the turn of expression as familiar.

* 9. M. Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux.

† 10. The reader will, however, observe, that the truth of the following translation, and the meaning given in

It is well known, that among the Hebrews, from the earliest times, the nuptial feast continued seven days. This appears from the words of Laban to Jacob, when he had obtruded Leah upon him instead of Rachel; "fulfil her week;" *i. e.* complete the seven days of the nuptial solemnity, Gen. xxix. 27. See also Sampson's marriage, Judges xiv. 15. and Tobit. viii. 19. 20.

DURING these seven days of feasting the Bridegroom was attended by a select number of companions: A select number of virgins also accompanied the Bride; these are called in the book of Psalms, "the virgins that be her fellows," Psal. xlv. 14; and are in the Gospel said to be ten in number, Matth. xxv. 1. In the company of these the week for solemnizing of marriage was spent, no doubt in every kind of diversion that was not forbidden by the law. [*11] And from the following Poem it should seem, that every one of the seven days was antiently appropriated to some ceremony that entered into a confirmation of the marriage: [†12] At present
the

in the paraphrase and notes to the different expressions of the book, do not depend upon the supposal of seven days feast.

* 11. EVEN the intervention of the Sabbath did not interrupt the nuptial festivities. See Calmet and Selden.

† 12. This observation of the author is not, I think, strictly true: I see no ceremonies appropriated to particular

the Jews complete all the nuptial rites on the evening of the marriage, and devote the seven days following to festivity and mirth only. The several writers who have treated of the marriage ceremonies of the Jews, vary in their accounts from each other, and expressly tell us that different usages have prevailed in different times and places; for zealously as the Jews were attached to their antient customs, they have admitted considerable changes in this respect, as well as other nations. A striking difference may be observed between the marriage rites occasionally mentioned in the gospel, and those observed by the Jews at present; and doubtless in the time of Solomon, and in the ages preceding the captivity, they were still more remote from the modern usage. This ought to be considered by those who are disappointed in not finding in this Poem all the marriage ceremonies described as they are laid down in the Jewish ritual.

IN an excellent little treatise, intituled, "The present state of the Jews," by L. Addison, (father of the poet,) we learn how marriages are solemnized among

particular days, except the third, fourth, sixth, and perhaps the seventh. The rest seem spent in sports and in the necessary employments of a country life; for even on the sabbath every one was obliged to lead his ox and his ass to water: so that going with the flock is no objection to its being the time of the nuptial feast.

mong the Jews of Barbary. After the marriage-contract is made between the Bridegroom and the Bride's relations, she is carefully bathed for several days; and this with a peculiar attention on the eve [* 13] before the marriage; after which she is secluded from the sight of all men, even her nearest relations. On the wedding-day she is finely adorned, and passes the morning in acts of devotion. Towards evening, the Bridegroom comes attended with some select friends, by whom he is conducted into a chamber, where the Bride sits between two virgins, as her attendants. She continues seated, while a Rabbi reads the bill of dower, and then the Bridegroom puts a ring upon one of her fingers, calling to all present to attest the ceremony. Which done, the Rabbi pronounces them married, and gives them the nuptial benediction. Then wine is presented to the Bridegroom, and he breaks the glass in memory of the destruction of the Temple. [† 14.] After

D this,

* 13. The Jewish day began at six in the evening, so that the bathing might immediately precede the reception of the Bridegroom, tho' performed the day before.

* 14. This shews how modern times have added to the Jewish ceremonies; tho' possibly as to this one in particular, (supposing an earthen vessel to have been used 'till glass was invented,) it may have been more antient than the destruction of the temple, and intended

this, he takes off the Bride's veil, and, giving her his hand, sits down by her. The marriage-supper is then served up, after which they are conducted into the bridal-chamber: This, in the summer, is usually a kind of bower or arbour. On the next morning begins the nuptial feast, and continues seven days, during which the Bridegroom does not cohabit with the Bride, unless in the day-time; and this helps to account for the Bridegroom's absence from the Bride in many evenings of the following Poem. During that separation, the young couple make little agreeable presents to each other, and, no doubt, exhibit other tender proofs of their regard. Let it be remembered, as is before observed, that tho' among the modern Jews the nuptial rites seem almost all to be performed in one day, and the rest given up to mirth, yet here the several parts of the solemnity seem performed in different days, which might be the more antient custom.

BUT whilst we attend to the literal sense of this Poem, which is the chief thing intended here to be explained, we must not forget that the whole is a symbolical representation of Christ and his Church; and that this sense, tho' least attended to, is really the most important. Without this we shall not see the propriety of many expressions. To instance only in
two,

ed to express the frailty of all sublunary joys; tho' afterwards applied by the Rabbies to the particular calamity of the temple's being burnt, when taken by Titus.

two, let us consider the first words, which, in the short expressive manner of the eastern writers, begin the Poem; and the 9th verse of the last chapter, "Let him kiss me with the kisses." The manners of modern times are so corrupt, that the mention of a kiss brings commonly with it the idea of wanton affection, with something even low and vulgar in the manner of expressing it. But this is owing to wrong habits in conversation, reading, &c. for nothing in reality is more innocent and tender than this expression of fondness: It is the voice of nature, [*15:] whose feelings words cannot express. Ask the fond mother, or even the hireling nurse, why they smother with kisses the smiling infant; they will say they cannot forbear. Or ask a tender parent of either sex, what their feelings are, when they cling to the lips of an only child, either parting or returning after a long absence? Why does friendship seek the same expression of kindness as love? And if between men this is less frequent, is it not because *their* ideas are less chaste than those of the other sex? May not a sister embrace a loved brother with the utmost tenderness, and yet with perfect purity? And an husband shew his affection to his wife, independent of the particular relation they bear to each other? All this concerns the text we are upon, considering

* 15. This is so true, that even animals are observed to caress each other somewhat in the same manner, and that without any regard to sex, or season of the year.

considering it as to the literal sense; but a kiss was besides considered in antient times as a form of worship, [*16.] not only among the Jews, but the Greeks, the Romans, and other heathens. It was, and is, likewise a token of peace, of reconciliation, of care and protection, of condescension in a superior; and its use in expressing all these was probably the reason of its being here introduced; as at the same time the mention of it was suitable to the manners of the times and the people here described.

As for the 9th verse of the last chapter, the second instance with regard to the case in hand, tho' the mention of a sister of the Bride's, (if the subject treated of be, as is supposed, the settling the dower) comes in properly enough; yet it cannot be said to be in the literal sense an ornament to the Poem; but in the spiritual sense it is a circumstance of the greatest consequence, being a prophecy concerning the Gentile Church, and containing most valuable promises to her. And doubtless on this account it is, that this passage is introduced and mentioned in expressions often used both as to building up a family, and edifying the Church of God; to which the metaphor

* 16. "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry;" Psal. ii. 12.
 "or my mouth hath kissed my hand," Job. xxxi. 27.
 So, in Minutius Felix, the heathen kisses his hand in sign of worship to Serapis Minutii. Fel. Octavius, § 2.

taphor of an house, a wall or a tower, is often applied.

THE

Note of enquiry, Who the Bride was?

17. I could gladly have avoided entering into the question, Who the Bride of the Canticles may be supposed to be? and therefore left it, as the New Translator had done, in a sort of uncertainty, on account of a chronological difficulty, which I must otherwise engage in: But, upon considering more fully how much is said in the Scripture concerning Pharaoh's daughter, and that the whole strength of the argument against her being the typical spouse is taken from one text, viz. 1 Kings xiv. 21. I thought myself obliged to state the case to the reader in this place.

In this text then Rehoboam is said to have been 41 years of age when he began to reign; and his mother to have been Naamah an Ammonitess. Again, we are told, 1 Kings xi. 42. that Solomon reigned about 40 years. Consequently Solomon must have been married to Naamah, and his son Rehoboam been born, before the death of David. In this case therefore, either we must allow the Ammonitess to be the typical spouse; or suppose Solomon to have married a wife before her, or seek the Bride of the Canticles amongst the women he married, not only after he came to the throne, but after he had a son already born. Each of these suppositions, however, is attended with great difficulties. First, it is not probable that an Ammonitess should be the typical spouse, nor indeed that David should suffer his son to marry,
when

THE author of the New Translation justly observes, that the spiritual and literal sense in this book should

when young and tender, a woman, whose fathers were forbidden to enter into the congregation even to the tenth generation. Deut. xxiii. 3. David says, "Solomon, my Son, is young and tender." 1 Chron. xxix. 1. Solomon says of himself, "I am but a child." 1 Kings iii. 7. And all the little circumstances related of him shew him to be very young, and turn our thoughts from any notion of his being an husband or a father, when he came to the throne. In the next place, if we should suppose the Bride of the Song to be a wife married before the Ammonitess, these objections as to Solomon's youth would be still greater. As to seeking her, according to the third supposition, among the number of wives Solomon had after he came to the throne, I own there seems to me a great impropriety in it: The character of the Bridegroom, the purity and innocence of his affection to his Bride, the solemn declaration that one, that she alone, is his beloved, all suit the first attachment of a virtuous youth, such as Solomon is represented in the first years of his reign, but not with his conduct in the following years, when he took many strange wives, together with Pharaoh's daughter; 1 Kings xi. 1. and ceased to be a fit type of the heavenly Bridegroom. If we follow the present Hebrew text as to the age of Rehoboam, we must do so likewise as to the years which Solomon reigned, which are said to be but 40. This brings on other objections; for Rehoboam,

should not be confounded together ; the literal should be complete and consistent with itself, and so it is. But still

hoam, supposed to be 41 years of age, is said, 2 Chron. xiii. 7. to be young and tender hearted, tho' eleven years older than his grandfather was when he began to reign ; and Solomon at the end of his reign is called old, tho' by that account he could not well be above 55, even at the conclusion of it, which is not an age liable to the infirmities he is represented as sinking under. If, to add to Solomon's age, we will suppose him to be 20 or 25, when he came to the throne, other difficulties will still arise ; for this would carry back the affair of Bathsheba to the seventh, or at least to the twelfth year after David was settled at Jerusalem, which seems full soon, especially as no mention is made of Solomon in David's distress upon the rebellion of Absalom, when, according to this account, he must have been something towards a man at least. It is said, when Absalom went to Hebron, to begin his rebellion, 2 Sam. xv. 7. " It came " to pass after 40 years." This must be understood either of Absalom's life, or of David's reign, but most probably of the latter ; for as Absalom was David's third son, born in Hebron, he could hardly be called 40 years of age even in the last of David's reign. If then we still keep close to the Hebrew chronology, we must suppose the rebellion of Absalom to have broke out in the beginning of the last year of David's reign ; and if Solomon was then a boy, he might pass unnoticed among the King's household ; but if he was 25, or even 20 years old,

still I must repeat, as above, that the spiritual should be always kept in view, as being that which was certainly

old, it is much he should not be mentioned. Here then are three dates of equal authority, but hard to reconcile; the 40 years at which Abfalom's rebellion began; the 40 of Solomon's reign, and the 41 years of Rehoboam's age. The authority of the Hebrew text is strong and well supported; yet, as we have no pretence to say it has been ever absolutely free from mistakes of transcribers, no more than the Greek text of the New Testament, which we are sure has not, I see no inconvenience in supposing such a mistake, as the change of a letter may have produced here in the account of Rehoboam's age, when he began to reign; and therefore I hope, with all due submission to better judgments, I may be allowed to mention that little which may be proposed on the other side. Josephus, Book viii. ch. iii. says, "Solomon died aged 94 years, of which he had reigned four-score." This would make him 15 in the first year of his reign, and reconcile all the difficulties; but it will be said Josephus here stands alone. Dr Wall, on 1 Kings xiv. 21. mentions an interpolation or fragment of the Septuagint, Vat. and Ald. (for it is not found in the Alexandrian MS.) inserted after vol. xxiv. ch. xii. where it is said Rehoboam was 16 years old when he began to reign. If this (says Dr Wall) may be allowed for a true reading, it does much better fit with the context, and the history and chronology of the times, viz. with the sins and follies recorded, 1 Kings xii. 13. If the

tainly first in the intention of the divine Author, and that in which ourselves are chiefly interested; and

E

lastly,

the passage Dr Wall quotes, be an interpolation, no great credit can be given to it; but if it is taken out of a fragment of a Greek copy, it may be worth some notice; for such a fragment, tho' not so valuable as the authentic MS. of the Septuagint, may in reality be older than they; and in a passage of no consequence as to doctrine, and where a point of chronology may be helped, it may be allowed some weight. However, all I would conclude as to these intricate questions, which I shall not enter any further into, is only this, that a text so liable to objections, as that which fixes the birth of Rehoboam to the year before David's death, should not be admitted as a full proof against the spouse of the Canticles being the daughter of Pharaoh, and the first wife of Solomon.

LET us now consider what light other texts of Scripture afford as to this matter. First, there is no mention of Solomon's having son or wife before he took Pharaoh's daughter, 1 Kings iii. 1. This princess is mentioned five several times, whereas no one of Solomon's wives, except the Ammonitess, is ever named, and she only on account of her son. In the beginning then, perhaps the first year of Solomon's reign, before the temple was begun, whilst as yet, according to his own words, he was but a little child, he made affinity with Pharaoh, and took Pharaoh's daughter to wife, 1 Kings iii. 1. She is next mentioned on account of Solomon's building her

lastly, that without which, the meaning of the literal expressions will never be fully understood.

P. S.

her an house, a palace like his own, ch. vii. 8. The circumstance of her coming to occupy this house is mentioned ch. ix. 24. The same is also set down as a thing of note, 2 Chron. viii. 11. Lastly, when Solomon's taking strange wives is recorded, 1 Kings xi. 1. it is particularly observed that he took them together with Pharaoh's daughter, distinguishing her from them; which seems to imply, that 'till then she had preserved his whole affection, or at least that she was still considered as his Queen, his first and principal wife, preferred in love, in dignity, or in both, before all others. We may, I think, lay it down as a foundation, that the typical Bride, the Spouse of Solomon is, like the Spouse of Christ, one, and one alone; whatever is therefore found in Scripture concerning this distinguished character, may, I think, be understood in the literal sense of some one most particularly distinguished wife of Solomon. We find then, by turning to Psalm xlv. that this chosen Bride is a foreigner, she shall be brought unto the King royally arrayed, with virgins attending; and she is cautioned to forget her own people, and her father's house; she is called the King's daughter in the same place; a Prince's daughter, Cant. vii. 1. She is stiled the dove, the undefiled, the one only beloved, the fairest among women: All these characters agree with Pharaoh's daughter, so often, and so honourably mentioned; and with none else. Can we suppose the sacred text so careful to re-

cord

P. S. AFTER I had finished what I had intended as to the Sacred Poem here considered, I heard, for the

cord every circumstance concerning this one wife, and her alone, and not see in her the typical Spouse, the Spouse of the Canticles, the Queen, Psal. xlv. the Bride of the Revelations, the pure, undefiled, only beloved Spouse of Christ? And does not all this lead us to suppose Solomon, the typical Bridegroom, to be, at the time of this his first espousals, as pure and chaste as she? and this his first love to be, as is commonly the case, an affection for delicacy and tenderness, far beyond the wanton excess of those disorderly passions which afterwards hurried him to destruction; passions, which, by their violence, overpowered his reason, but had nothing of that constant regular love, founded on esteem, that seems to have continued unshaken through those years, in which piety towards God, and a regard for duty, regulated all Solomon's actions, and subjected every thought to the will of his Maker, which is the only source of happiness either here or hereafter? We may, or may not, however, suppose Rehoboam's mother to be the first of Solomon's strange wives, according to the chronology we follow; for he began to take such together with Pharaoh's daughter, *i. e.* whilst she was yet living, and perhaps whilst she was still young enough to claim his whole affection; for there is a plain distinction made between his taking many strange wives, which was probably in the vigour of his age, and his turning to idolatry, which was when he was old.

the first time, of Dr Gill's explanation of it ; and of another book on the same subject, by the author of *Observations*, &c. I read them both through with great attention, but did not however take notice, till I had almost finished the latter performance, that the author was the very person I had mentioned in the beginning of my own *Essay*. Tho' I cannot agree with either of these gentlemen as to several things, their notions differing from mine as much as from each other ; yet I have taken the liberty, by adding some notes, to shelter myself under their authorities wherever I could ; and sometimes I have ventured, I hope without offence, to criticise a little upon the *Observations* and *Queries*. If the example of another could justify me, I should be pleased, perhaps, to see this writer indulge his fancy to such a degree as to make the warmth of my own imagination appear as nothing, at least in my own eyes ; but in these things we are not to be judged of by comparison. The imagination is a dangerous faculty ; I am very sensible of it ; and if I have indulged it more than I ought, I am very sorry for it : I can only say, that, charmed with a beautiful Poem, I have treated it in a poetic manner, and wish I was able to give it a true poetic dress, fit to set it once more by the side of its companion, the *Coheloth*, so finely set forth by a modern author in English verse. One thing

thing I beg the reader to observe, which is, that tho' I have sometimes followed the New Translator, I have done it very sparingly ; and as for translations of my own, I have not ventured upon any without sufficient authorities, which I have, I believe, always set down. The Poem indeed appears here in a different light from that in which the generality of readers may have taken it, but this is owing to a different division of the chapters, to a new disposition of the parts, a different distribution of the speeches amongst the persons of the Drama, and to some difference in the stops and accents : All which in the original Hebrew are left to the discretion of the reader, as has been often observed. Let any one take a Latin, or a French play, or even a play of our own Shakespear, and write it out line after line, without names of persons, distinction of scenes or acts, without capital letters, stops or accents, or any account of the scene of action, or of what is done by the actors, more than as expressed by their own words, and he will be sensible in such a case how easy it may be to mistake the sense of an author so represented, especially by persons used to a different method. Such is the dress, in which not only the manuscript copies of the Bible, but the old Greek poets are found. To which when we add the disadvantages from distance of time, want of books to compare with each other, and the difference of customs and manners, it will appear much

much more amazing that the Scriptures should be so perfect as they are, than that there should be some differences as to the sense of them in points of small importance. What was done by the Masorets, with regard to the vowel points, &c. soon after our blessed Saviour's time, tho' perhaps of use in some respects, in others has added obscurity rather than light; and the same may be said as to the more modern divisions into chapter and verse. The book of Canticles in particular has greatly suffered as to the understanding of its literal sense, from its being less read and studied than other parts of Scripture, and from the eagerness of its commentators, not only modern but antient, Jews and Christians, before as well as since the Jewish dispersion, to explain the typical sense, without attending enough to the literal, which should be the foundation to proceed upon; but which has been too often forced from its natural construction to favour private fancies.

I HAVE considered myself in what I have done, as a lover of painting, who may give advice, though he does not dare to touch the pencil; and I think I may say without offence, that the generality of commentators are in the situation of those painters who devote all their time and skill to restore fine pictures, which time and ill usage have damaged. By continually poring upon a near object, to discover and take out spots, or to restore a place that has been effaced,

they

they lose, in some degree, their taste for elegance and proportion ; and sometimes let beauties escape them, or even suffer under their hands, which a vulgar eye, rightly placed, would have perceived : Nay, they sometimes take that for a spot, which in reality is an useful shade. It is necessary for them to look near, and even to use glasses to distinguish what may be wanting, or what may have been added : But it is as useful for the same purpose, to step back from time to time, and take a view of the whole, to examine the air and manner of the picture, the disposition of the parts, and the stile of the master ; but this, intense application often prevents their doing. In like manner, it is necessary for a commentator to examine carefully letters, words, and every nicety of grammar, and let nothing go unobserved : Yet often the sense of an author may be sooner hit upon, by a general view of his stile and manner of expression, and by attending to the whole scope of the book, and the turn of the periods. And here the friend, tho' unskilful, if placed in a better light, may be of use. It is true, with regard to the Scriptures, great caution should be used : Where the sense is plain and obvious, it should not be altered, tho' some nicety of grammar may seem wanting : And again, where there is a regular construction of a sentence, it must not be changed without good authority, though the sense should not be plain to us ; because many things

foreign

foreign to the text may occasion its obscurity. Many perhaps read Psal. xxxvii. 20. without understanding why "the enemies of the Lord shall consume as the fat of lambs;" not that the text has any difficulty in it, but because they are not accustomed, as the Jews were, to see the fat of the peace-offering laid upon the altar, where the fire soon melted it away to nothing; that fire, which was a well-known emblem of the wrath of God. Great caution therefore, as I said before, should be ever observed, where supposed difficulties are to be explained; but when a text neither conveys a clear idea, nor has a plain grammatical construction, and that all the translations are likewise obscure, which in some, tho' very few instances, is the case, all will, and must guess for themselves, if any probable conjecture offers itself; or they will humbly pass it by, as above their skill, which often is the wisest part as to ourselves, but not always right with regard to others.

I HAVE taken the liberty, for the sake of shortening my notes, to express the author of Observations by the letters A. B. and Dr Gill by the next letters, C. D. As the former seems to join with Lady Mary Wortly-Montague, in admiring the conformity of a modern eastern love-song, by Ibrahim, favourite of Achmet the Third, I would not deprive the reader of it; but I must own I cannot think, as they seem to do, that it is fit to be placed in comparison with the song

Song of Solomon. The one is full of expressions of esteem, tender affection, and condescension, on the one side ; of humility, reverence, and chaste love, on the other : But in Ibrahim you have only the common declamations of a selfish passion, working in a violent temper ; a disposition liable to change for the first new object, and to be followed by as violent hatred. It may be of some use, however, in showing the boldness of the metaphors, and the unconnected manner of writing, so common among the eastern nations, which is the very thing most apt to give offence in the Scripture poetry.

I.

The nightingale now wanders in the vines ;

Her passion is to seek roses.

I went down to admire the beauty of the vines.

The sweetness of your charms hath ravished my
soul.

Your eyes are black and lovely ;

But wild and disdainful as those of a stag.

II.

The wished possession is delayed from day to day.

The cruel Sultan, Achmet, will not permit me

To see those cheeks, more vermilion than roses.

I dare not snatch one of your kisses.

The sweetness of your charms hath ravished my
soul!

Your eyes are black and lovely ;

But wild and disdainful as those of a stag.

III.

The wretched Ibrahim sighs in those verses.

One dart from your eyes has pierced thro' my heart.

Ah ! when will the hour of possession arrive ?

Must I yet wait a long time ?

The sweetness of your charms hath ravished my
soul !

Ah Sultana ! stag-eyed ; an angel amongst angels !

I desire, and my desire remains unsatisfied.

Canst thou take delight to prey upon my heart ?

IV.

My cries pierce the heavens !

My eyes are without sleep.

Turn to me, Sultana ; let me gaze on thy beauty.

Adieu ; I go down to the grave :

If thou callest me, I return :

My

My heart is as hot as sulphur ; sigh, and it will
flame.

Crown of my life, fair light of my eyes!

My Sultana! my Princess!

I rub my face against the earth ; I am drowned
in scalding tears ; I rave !

Hast thou no compassion ? Wilt thou not turn,
and look upon me ?

IN opposition to this so much admired eastern song, expressing the wild passions of Ibrahim, may I be allowed to set a favourite ballad of the last century, as a proof that delicacy of sentiment did not displease an English ear at that time ; and likewise as so far illustrating the subject, as it shews that a character somewhat similar to that of the Bridegroom was not thought liable to ridicule by our ancestors ; tho' I doubt it will appear so now to many, who, tho' they are, and wish to be thought, sober men, yet are not sorry to be thought to have been otherways.

I.

I'll range around the shady bow'rs,
And gather all the sweetest flowers ;
I'll strip the garden and the grove,
To make a garland for my love.

II.

II.

When in the sultry heat of day,
 My thirsty Nymph does panting ly,
 I'll hasten to the fountain's brink,
 And drain the stream, that she may drink.

III.

At night, when she shall weary prove,
 A grassy bed I'll make my love ;
 And with green boughs I'll form a shade,
 That nothing may her rest invade.

IV.

And whilst dissolv'd in sleep she lyes,
 Myself shall never close these eyes ;
 But gazing still with fond delight,
 I'll watch my charmer all the night.

V.

And when the chearful dawn of day
 Dispels the gloomy shades away ;
 Forth to the forest I'll repair,
 And seek provision for my fair.

VI.

VI.

Thus will I spend the day and night,
 Still mixing labour with delight;
 Regarding nothing I endure,
 So I can ease for her procure.

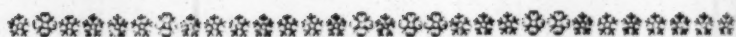
VII.

But if the maid, whom thus I love,
 Should e'er unkind or faithless prove;
 I'll seek some dismal distant shore,
 And never think of woman more.

T H E



I. Eclog.	is from Chap. I. 1.	to Ch. II. 7.
II.	from II. 8.	to III. 5.
III.	from III. 6.	to IV. 7.
IV.	from IV. 8.	to V. 1.
V.	from VI. 2.	to VI. 10.
VI.	from VI. 11.	to VIII. 4.
VII.	from VIII. 5.	to VIII. 14.



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COMMENTARY,

EXPLAINING the whole POEM,

AND

POINTING OUT and ILLUSTRATING

THE

CONTENTS of each DIVISION.

The first DAY'S ECLOG.

THE part of the marriage-ceremony, in which the religious rites had been performed, and the solemn benediction received, being past, and the Bride having been brought to her husband's house; [*18.] the Poem begins.

* 18. The expression the Bride makes use of, saying, "The King has brought me into his chambers," does not however necessarily imply this, it being only a way of speaking expressive of his having taken her to wife. In other parts of the Poem, she seems to be in an home of her own, or of her mother's; but might have been brought into the King's chambers, as Isaac brought Rebekah

gins with the morning of the first day of the nuptial feast. "The Bride, full of the charming idea" of her Lord, and probably thinking herself alone, "breaks out into the most fervent expressions of love and tenderness, addresses herself to the object of her affections, as if he were present," [* 19.]—"declaring her regard, and bearing testimony to the amiableness of his character, which, by a common eastern metaphor, she compares to the diffusive fragrance of fine ointments or perfumes," so much esteemed in those countries; and professes her dutiful obedience and readiness to perform his commands, "Oh draw me after thee." Upon this, her companions, who seem, according to the

thebekah into his mother's tent, thereby inflating her in the dignity of mother of the family, which she continued to enjoy, even preferably to Abraham's wife, Keturah; and that even notwithstanding her being twenty years barren; for "in Isaac shall thy seed be called," were the words of the promise, and Rebekah was chosen by divine appointment to fulfil them.

* 19. So David speaks to Jonathan, as if present, 2 Samuel, i. 25. 26. though he was not only absent, but dead. See A. B. page 19. and 91.

the eastern manner, to have waited at a distance, with modest silence, come near, and express their readiness to attend her, saying, "we will run to the fragrance of the perfumes." She, surprised, as not thinking them so near, and perhaps, rejoiced at seeing some of her former companions, [* 20.] whilst a shepherdes, tells them, (not giving herself time to reflect that they might already know it), the King has

G brought

* 20. If the bride was an Egyptian, the companions, who are every where called daughters of Jerusalem, could not have been literally acquaintance of long standing; but they may probably enough be supposed to be such as had been sent to fetch her from her own country, and were grown into a good degree of familiarity and affection: "The virgins that be her fellows shall bear her company, and shall be brought unto thee;" Psal. xlv. 14. Or, if we consider the bride in her fictitious character of a shepherdes, we may then look upon them as the companions of her youth, sometime back, while they might be feeding their flocks in what was called the wilderness, tho' dwelling at Jerusalem; for the Hebrews were all at first shepherds or husbandmen, employed in the field, tho' they dwelt in towns. But if neither of these be admitted, let us leave out the supposed joy, and consider the bride's speech as the effect of surprize only.

brought me into his inner chambers; [*21] *i.e.* has taken me, his humble handmaid, to be his wife. They answer by congratulating her happiness, and praising her as worthy of it. "This produces some modest abatements [† 22.] " on her part, and a short sketch of the early part

* 21. A. B. p. 97. says, the words should be rendered, " the king is bringing me into his chambers, or about " to do so."

† 22. *Modest abatements*; " I am black but comely." A. B. quotes Maillet, saying, that ordinary women in Egypt are extremely tawny; princesses not so, being always kept from the sun; "*elles sont assez belles.*" This he renders, " pretty fair;" which is a mistake I wonder any one should fall into; for tho' we use the word *fair* to express the colour of the skin, as well as the beauty of a woman, yet the French word *belle* is never used in any such sense. The words *assez belles* mean tolerably handsome, or handsome enough, and can bear no other translation. As for women of fashion being kept from the sun, it has been already observed p. 14. that the jealous customs of the Mahometans were not introduced in the times spoken of in Scripture. The daughter of Pharaoh, by whom Moses was saved, came even to wash in the river, with no other ceremony than her maids walking by its banks, to keep men at a distance: Bathsheba did the same, probably in a fountain in her husband's garden,

tho'

part of her history. But immediately renewing her enquiries after her lover, by that fine apostrophe, "tell me O thou,"—she receives some general directions from her virgin-companions, in consequence of which she sets out (with them), in search of him. And here seems to be a break in this day's Eclog.

The Bridegroom resting under a pleasant shade, secure from the heat of the sun, his flock feeding round him on the flowery grass, sees the Bride coming at a distance in search of him; gazes, we may suppose, fondly on her, and praises her graceful appearance, as she comes near, comparing her to a beautiful
mare,

tho' perhaps with less caution than she ought. Both were exposed to the air at least, if not to the sun. The patriarchs wives had waggons for their journey from Egypt. How Solomon's bride was conveyed is not said: But even the care of modern times could hardly prevent some injury from the heat at such a time of the year, and this might give occasion for the fiction of her being tanned by keeping the vineyards. In Sophocles's Oedipus, his daughter is described taking a journey on horseback, with only a veil to shelter her from the sun.

mare, [* 23.] taught to move with dignity, when drawing a chariot. The virgins offer their assistance in adorning her; and probably the borders of gold and studs of silver they mention, allude to the rich trappings of the creature she had just been compared to; and not to any part of a woman's dress. [† 24.] She, attending only to her lord, expresses her desire of contributing to his happiness, and shews the value she sets upon him, by comparing him to things which in those countries they used to put in their bosoms, as refreshing outward cordials. He repeats her praises; and she his, and admires the sweet shade, the place of rest, where she had found him. [‡ 25.] The dialogue is

* 23. The Hebrew word used literally signifies a *mare*; nor should we consider the comparison as coarse or vulgar, if we knew what beautiful and delicate creatures the eastern horses are, and how highly they are valued. Theocritus, (as is observed by Grotius and others), has made use of the very same image to express the beauty of Helen. See A. B. p. 172. and 70.

† 24. See note 54.

‡ 25.—*our bed*.—The heat of the sun in those countries is so intense, that nothing seems more delightful than a shady green spot to sit or lye upon, a natural sofa or couch,

is carried on in a very poetical manner, with that digressive unconnected wildness of transition, which all pastoral poetry delights in.

The second DAY'S ECLOG.

THE BRIDE is supposed to have left the bridegroom at rest, (at rest in her mother's house, says A. B. p. 183.), and to be alone with her companions. She relates how he had come, probably whilst it was yet night, (for in those countries the day-break is never very early), "accompanied with his companions, and equipped for rural sports, (or some useful labour); how he had called under her window, inviting her to come forth
"and

couch. A. B. understands the word *bed* as I do, and describes a duan or sofa, p. 227. The mention of Pharaoh's chariot seems to favour the notion of the bride's being his daughter. To a Hebrew woman it would probably be a simile of a thing unknown, or known only by hearsay. Her account of her sufferings at home seems also to suppose her a foreigner; so does her using the expression, "daughters of Jerusalem," as if herself was not one of them. See p. 49. note 20.

“and enjoy the beauties of the spring;” to which she had replied in that charming epiphonema, “My beloved is mine;” but had, instead of rising to go with him, only put him in mind to pursue his wonted employments till it was day, and they might then be, as usual, together. But he was no sooner gone, than she began to charge herself with unkindness in refusing the invitation; this made her rest uneasy, and prompted her to arise, and go thro’ the city, to seek her lord; whom, when found, she conducted to her mother’s house or apartment; where having persuaded him to rest, the heat coming on, she charges the virgins not to disturb him. And here, at verse 6th of chapter III. that dialogue, or rather monody, ends.

The third DAY’S ECLOG.

IT “opens with the introduction of the “bridal bed or pavilion, and concludes “with the ceremony of taking off the Bride’s “veil;” *i. e.* shewing her in public for the first time. The author of the New Translation
of

of Canticles, gives a very probable and a very pleasing representation of the account given in the end of chapter III. and beginning of the next: He supposes part of the chorus of virgins, upon seeing something advance from the wilderness, [*26.] to say; What, (or who,) [†27.] is this? the others to answer, It is the pavi-

* 26. The road to *Gaza* is called the desert or wilderness, Acts viii. 26; supposed not far from *Bethlehem*. See A. B. p. 331. It is well known that the word *wilderness* does not always mean a barren desert place; but a country thinly inhabited.

† 27. The change of *who* for *what*, i. e. of a ' *Jod*, for an ' *He*, which he thinks of importance, and accounts for by supposing ' *J* to have been effaced, and the transcriber to have mistaken what was left for a ' *Jod*, seems to me no less unnecessary than it is dangerous; for, if we should read *who*, (as it now stands with an *He* in all the copies), the sense would be the same; the virgins, upon seeing a moveable pavilion coming forwards, naturally supposing it contained somebody, and asking *who* it was; the others answering, it is the bridal-tent of Solomon, he therefore is in it. Should any one, seeing a fine equipage come up the Strand in London, say, Who comes here? and be answered, It is my Lord Mayor's coach; would not the answer be as intelligible, as if it had been said, What is this? However ingeni-

pavilion of Solomon ; [* 28.] and upon his appearing, coming out of it adorned, as a Bridegroom out of his chamber, the Spouse is supposed

ous the conjecture of the author of the New Translation, (See his annot. p. 66.), as to the change of one letter, may appear at first sight ; yet, I must repeat it, I think it not only unnecessary, but dangerous. Altho' the Hebrew text has not been miraculously preserved free from all mistakes, any more than the Greek of the New Testament ; yet both have been visibly the care of providence, and have been preserved in a state of perfection much beyond what one could naturally expect in a book of such antiquity as the Bible ; great caution should therefore be observed as to admitting any alteration in the original text. A. B. p. 14. has already laid hold of the supposed change here mentioned, to countenance what appears to me another needless alteration : Others may do the same with worse designs.

* 28. The word rendered *bed*, ch. iii. 7. is found nowhere else in the Bible, and seems very improperly to be understood of a bed in the common acceptation, especially as the beds in the east are always open, without curtains, and commonly flat on the ground. The word *chariot*, (*or bed* as in the margin), verse 9th, is different, and likewise of uncertain signification ; and yet there can be no doubt but the same machine, whatever it was, or however distinguished, is spoken of in each place ;
and

“ posed to say ; go forth, O ye daughters ;
 “ &c.” See the parable of the ten virgins,
 Matth. xxv. What is here mentioned, seems
 to pass in the Bride’s apartment, whence she

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sends

and that it was some royal abode conveyed along, and prepared by Solomon for the reception of his bride ; A. B. speaks of the *bed* here mentioned as of a sort of *palanquin* placed on a camel, like a print, which he has set for a frontispiece to his book ; p. 126. But as chariots were used among the Hebrews even from the time of Joseph, and by their kings all along, it is more probable that a pavilion conveyed upon wheels is the thing here spoken of, the *bed* and *chariot* being parts of one machine. What is most strange is, his putting the bride alone in it, whereas the text plainly supposes her to be in the house, and to send her companions forth to meet King Solomon.

The word rendered *paved*, ver. 10. is also doubtful, as being likewise found only in three or four places, and differently translated : it may be understood of a floor or ground-work, or of the carpet or covering of the floor ; but however rendered, it conveys no idea but that of a place where the bride alone, or she and her companions, were to be received with tender affection and care ; as, in the spiritual sense, all the good things prepared for us, have for their foundation or ground-plot, the tender love of Christ to our souls.

sends the virgins forth [* 29.] to meet the Bridegroom, who, with his grand retinue was now approaching very near. [† 30.]

King Solomon enters, “not as usual, in the simplicity of his pastoral dress, but in all the
“ gay

* 29. A. B. p. 10. thinks this going forth to meet the bridegroom, fixes this ceremony to the first day of the solemnity, because it was to be followed by the feast mentioned, St Matth. xxv. But the feast lasted seven days; and tho’ it might be more pompous on the day mentioned by St Matthew, nothing is there said to exclude feasting on the other days; so that I see no reason why it may not as well be supposed to be the third day as the first.

† 30. “The bridegroom, according to a ceremony
“ used at this time by the Jews in Barbary, comes so-
“ lemnly to unveil the bride; after which his praises
“ follow very naturally.” But the author might have added another probable circumstance, (tho’ not mentioned), as to Solomon, which is the taking the crown spoken of in the preceding verse, from his own head, and placing it on that of his bride; for when Ezekiel, ch. xvi. gives an account how Jerusalem, a wretched infant, cast out and forsaken, was raised up by Jehovah, cleansed, adorned, and admitted into covenant as his wife; there is express mention of his putting a crown upon her head; and it was a ceremony pretty generally
used

“ gay ornaments of a royal Bridegroom ; and
 “ here it should seem that, in the presence of
 “ all his friends, he performs the ceremony of
 “ taking

used in antient, as well as modern times. It was usual, (says the author himself, p. 68. of annotations), with many nations, to put crowns or garlands on the heads of new married persons. The Misnah informs us, that this custom prevailed among the Jews ; and it should seem from the passage before us, that the ceremony of putting it on was performed by one of the parents : Among the Greeks the bride was crowned by her mother, as is inferred from the instance of Iphigenia in *Euripides*, v. 903. See Bochart in his *Geographia Sacra*, p. 2. l. 1. c. 25. who supposes the nuptial crown and other ornaments of a bride alluded to, Ezek. xvi. 8. 12. as above. The nuptial crowns used among the Greeks and Romans were only chaplets of leaves or flowers. Among the Hebrews they were not only of these, but also occasionally of richer materials, as gold, silver, &c. according to the rank or wealth of the parties. See Selden's *Uxor Hebraica*, lib. 2. c. 15. The original word used in the text is עטרה, *ahtere*, (derived from עטר *ahter*, *circumcinxit*, *circumtexit*), which is the same that is used to express a kingly crown, 2 Sam. xii. 30. 1 Chron. xx. 2 ; and is often described to be of gold, Esth. viii. 5. Pf. xxi. 4. but appears to have been worn by those that were no kings, Job xix. 9. &c. ; and was probably often composed

fed

“ taking off the Bride’s veil;” [* 31.] which done, and (having adorned her with his crown) “ ravished with her beauties, he falls into a “ rapturous descant on them, and runs over “ her several features in an extasy of admiration, naturally expressed by bold and swelling “ figures.” [† 32.] The Bride mean while, covered with blushes, shews, by her timorous, trembling appearance, what she feels. Upon which he tells her, he will spare her confusion and

fed of less valuable materials, as of enamelled work; also of roses, myrtle, and olive leaves. The author here excepts Job, as not being a king; others think he was. A patriarchal king he certainly was; for he speaks of himself as protecting, judging, and punishing.

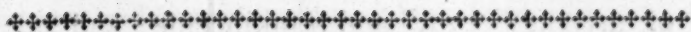
* 31. The bride’s appearing unveiled for the first time in public on the third day, was also a custom in Greece; See Potter’s *Antiq.* p. 294. v. 2. The marriage lasting several days, the living apart, the presents made to each other, are also mentioned by him.

† 32. Among these is a comparison of her breasts to two young roes that are twins, which simply conveys the idea of their being equal in shape and exceeding beautiful, the name of that creature, as the author says, expressing *loveliness*; but in the annotations, p. 72. he gives this text, I think, a very awkward turn, to say no worse.

and retire, till the morning, to the mountains of myrrhe [* 33.] and frankincense ; and accordingly, after a short but fervent speech, (“ Thou art all fair my love, there is no spot in thee),” this Eclog, concludes.

The

* 33. Myrrhe and frankincense are mentioned, ver. 13. 14. of this 4th chapter, as expressive symbols of the perfections of the bride, whom the bridegroom in that 4th Eclog compares to a garden producing such precious things. From hence, I suppose, the New Translator concludes that the same is here meant, and therefore gives a very different sense to this passage from that which I have set down. But that these expressions do not always convey the same idea, is plain from ch. vi. 2. where the bride speaking of her Lord as absent, says, “ He is gone to the garden of spices, &c.” in which place the words cannot be understood of herself. I am therefore as free to say the mountain of myrrhe here is a place to which the bridegroom used to go, and the same mentioned ch. vi. 2. as the author is to say it is meant of the bride, and quote ch. iv. 13. 14. To suppose Solomon, (who had observed the bride’s confusion, comparing her blushing cheeks to the pomegranates) to add to her distress by such an expression as the author imagines this to be, would give one but a poor notion of his goodness or politeness. See note 94.



The fourth DAY'S ECLOG.

THE BRIDEGROOM in the tenderest manner declares himself the Bride's protector, and "gives her to understand that she "is now under his care, and is only to apply "to him for relief under all dangers and difficulties." This, according to the eastern manner, he does in the way of parable or figure, by supposing her placed on the tops of mountains infested with wild beasts, whence he invites her to his arms, as to a place of safety, [* 34.] and assures her that, now he is

* 34 *Come to me, — i. e. fear me not, but trust in me with assured confidence.* The mountain of leopards, two miles from Tripoli in Syria, near Lebanon, is a large round rock, very high, and covered with cypress, fir, and other wild aromatic shrubs; and is inhabited only by tygers, leopards, and other wild beasts, whose roarings are heard at Tripoli, as if one was at the foot of that dreadful mountain.

It may be objected perhaps, that whereas Solomon, in the book of Proverbs, makes fortitude the chief part of

is her guardian, she may look down with security amidst any dangers. He then renews his praises, enumerates her perfections of body and mind, assures her that the smallest of her accomplishments do not pass unobserved, but ravish his heart, and bind him to her by the most tender affection. In the midst of all this, he introduces a public declaration, (before his friends, as the author supposes), that he has received her pure and inviolate: His

“ meaning

of a virtuous woman's character, the bride is here represented as a timorous person, wanting continual support; and that such a disposition not only implies weakness, but is inconsistent with the confidence she is supposed to have in the affection of the bridegroom; but let it be observed, that her trembling anxious care arises only from the fear of offending, not from any distrust: It is the natural consequence of youth and inexperience, where great tenderness is joined with esteem and reverence, affection prompts to every expression of kindness; and fear of being misapprehended, is a continual check. As to fortitude in every other respect, and confidence in the care of her husband; they are fully expressed in the bride's character, whom we must remember to consider as in the bloom of youth; whereas the wife in the Proverbs is of riper age, the mother of children, and head of a family.

“ meaning is conveyed with great delicacy,
 “ yet so as to be perfectly understood by all
 “ present, by his using eastern metaphors,
 “ expressive of his purpose, and, (it should
 “ seem), appropriated to the subject.” He
 declares that she is a garden secured from intruders; an inaccessible spring; an un sullied fountain under the sanction of an unbroken seal. [* 35.] And having compared her to a garden, he pursues the figure, and supposes all the finest vegetable productions to enrich and embellish it. She, catching up the metaphor, wishes, that this garden for which he has expressed so much fondness, might be so breathed on by the kindly gales, as to produce whatever might contribute to his delight. He returns the compliment, professes that his wish is completely accomplished, that every possible delight is in his possession, and he is entirely happy; and, (still keeping up the

* 35. Water in these countries is so plenty, we have no notion of sealing a fountain; but it is not so in hot countries; wells are very scarce, and probably, when one was near exhausted, they might close it with a stone, and set on a seal, to prevent its being wasted by the servants, and so give it time to fill again.

the metaphor), he invites his friends to sympathize and rejoice with him in his felicity, and taste the pleasures of the feast, which social love would make the more delightful.

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The fifth DAY'S ECLOG.

THIS begins with an account given by the Bride to her companions, (who are supposed to have met her in distress), of the cause which brought her into it; which was her anxious care to seek her beloved, whom she feared to have offended, by refusing him entrance in the night. [* 36.] This introduces

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* 36. It may be objected to this fifth day's Eclog, that it has too much sameness with the subject of the second. The simplicity of pastoral, of so antient a pastoral, probably the first ever wrote, might, I think, be a sufficient excuse; especially as we find the same if not greater want of incidents, even in the heroic, dramatic pieces of Sophocles, so many hundred years lower down; so that, merely as a poet, Solomon must stand acquitted by the judgment of what we call antiquity, and before the polite elegant Athenians. But, besides, if we compare the two Eclogs together, we shall soon see, not only

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a description of his person in all the pomp of
eastern metaphors, concerning which one
thing

ly a great variety in the circumstances, but also an apparent design in repeating those which are most alike, in order to introduce some useful instructions. In the *first* place, the bridegroom, who in the former Eclog tempted her abroad, now tries to move her affections to let him in; he stands not at the window inviting the bride to come out, but knocks at the door, attempts to open it, and claims admittance on account of the dew, &c. but, on the first repulse, retires hastily, as in some displeasure. *2dly*, The bride, tho' affected by the same concern for censure as in the former case; (and still more so on account of the additional circumstances just mentioned); tho', I say, she objects imprudently to his desire of coming in, yet she recollects herself, and rises immediately to open the door, charges herself with an appearance of unkindness, which she pleads however was not really such, and goes out even in the night, neglecting every concern but the favour of her Lord; all which was not in the former transaction; for there she seems, tho' uneasy at what had passed, to have stayed till day light encouraged her to go out without fear. The search for, and meeting of her by the virgins, is also an addition; and the usage she receives from the watchers is likewise very different from the former morning; all then mentioned was a slight question

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thing is not sufficiently attended to, and that is the epithets often given to the things to which a person is compared; which we are
apt

to which she did not wait for an answer; but now meeting a second time the same woman alone, and at an hour somewhat unusual, they proceed to rough usage, probably in attempting to remove her veil, to know who she was, which it was natural for her to endeavour to avoid. The moral, I suppose, intended, is, to teach an *eastern* wife at least, and in her every humble christian, carefully to take warning from the slightest mistake, and not to presume upon the indulgence of a tender generous disposition; and without consulting too much her own opinions, to yield ready obedience even to the slightest intimations of that will, which it is her profest glory to obey. Nothing can be more delicate than the manner in which this instruction is conveyed, for there is scarce the appearance of a fault expressed; and where in some degree it is, modesty and affection are represented as the cause of it, and make it seem rather an ornament than a blemish; whilst at the same time those sufferings consequent to the bride's indiscretion, appear as meritorious, being undergone with patience and fortitude for the sake of the beloved: Compare Psal. xlv. "hearken, O daughter, and consider—" with the instruction contained in this passage of the Song of Solomon. The first has the dignity and solemnity of a prophetic charge; the second is the gentle admonition of a poet and a lover.

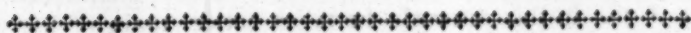
apt to apply to the persons themselves ; [* 37.] as here the Bridegroom's eyes are compared to those of a dove ; and the dove is described as clean washed, bathed even as it were in milk, for its extreme whiteness, and sitting delighted by the full streams ; these circumstances cannot relate to the Bridegroom's eyes, as some readers are apt to suppose ; they are only descriptive of the beauty of that creature, to whose sparkling eyes, thus exulting with pleasure, those of the beloved are compared ; or, if they have any further meaning, it is only an hint that such a beauteous dove is the person, of whose eyes she is speaking. The speech of the Bride, (who seems so wholly intent upon the object of her affections, that she addresses her companions as persons unknown, it being yet scarce light), is followed by an offer from them of seeking her beloved with her. She mentions the most likely place to find him, and is met by him a second time with the most tender affection and highest praises, which he concludes by letting her know

* 37. See page 52.

know how much she had been admired [*38.] at her first appearance the morning after her arrival, by all the females of his family; for the virgins without number certainly include all

* 38. In this discourse he takes notice again of her blushing cheeks and the removal of her veil. The first will be easily accounted for, when we reflect that she was actually distressed with fear of his displeasure, which made his praises more affecting to her modesty, than at any other time they would have been. And as for the veil, it seems, before the solemn removal of it, to have been always worn in presence of the husband; and accordingly we find Rebekah put it on to meet Isaac; and probably Sarah's laying it aside, when she pretended to be only Abraham's sister, was the reason why Abimelech, by way of a gentle reproof, told her he had given her husband a thousand pieces of silver for a veil; *it* (not *he*), shall be to thee for a covering of the eyes unto all with thee, and unto all, Gen. xx. 16. But after the husband had solemnly removed the veil, we may suppose it was always lifted up in his presence. See note 67. It is still the fashion in the Highlands of Scotland, for brides, who are virgins, to come to be married in their own hair, and widows to wear an head-dress; and when the reputation of a woman has not been clear, they have been afraid to come to the church without a cap, for fear of being insulted by the rest of their sex.

all his female slaves. From thence he takes occasion to assure her that his love is entirely fixed on her alone, in preference to all others. [* 38.]



The sixth DAY'S ECLOG.

“THE solemn putting of the Bride and
 “ Bridegroom to bed, (which makes
 “ so essential a part of the marriage-rites of
 “ all nations), seems to be the subject of this
 “ day's Eclog. This [† 40.] ceremony is de-
 “ ferred

* 39. “ My dove, my undefiled is one.”—In the Hebrew the words stand thus; “ One is my dove, my “ undefiled;” *i. e.* one only of all these is the object of my affection. To say of one woman, she is *one*, carries no idea. The other does, and a very proper one. There are several places in our translation of the Bible, where the transposition of words has hurt the sense. See Prov. iii. 35.

† 40. From this observation of the author we may suppose that himself looks upon the business of this day only as a ceremony, which alone destroys all his notions

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“ferred till now, when the Bride, after five
 “days, may be supposed to have somewhat
 “got the better of her virgin bashfulness.”

These are the words of the author, and in conformity to his plan, so far as here expressed, the paraphrase is carried on, tho’ in almost every particular circumstance it differs from him. The Bride is said to have gone down to the garden of nuts, and is supposed, from a modest fear, to have wandered still farther off. The bride-maids seek her, impatient for the pleasure of attending her in the bath, and afterwards adorning her in a proper manner to receive her royal Bridegroom in his own dwelling; [* 41.] for, according to the custom mentioned, p. 65. of Annotations, she seems to have passed the three or
 four

as to the children of the bride-chamber’s presence, &c. And this consideration, with what he says before of the new-married couple passing the nights asunder, p. 44. should, I think, be sufficient to set aside all the indelicate interpretations given by this author and others to different passages in this book, and bring the whole to that purity and elegance so remarkable in most parts of this divine poem.

* 41. See Note page 25.

four days preceeding in her mother's house, where the ceremony of the veil was performed. It seems probable that young maidens in those modest days were used to bathe alone, or attended only by some menial servants: So that it was natural for such an one to fear the eyes of her companions, and still more their praises. But the Bride, unwilling to own that this was what made her stay away, seems at a loss to excuse her absence. They press her to return, (as being now to be considered as the *Shulamith*, the wife of Solomon), and suffer them to look upon her; to view her charms; and to attend her with that familiarity, which, as bride-maids, they had a right to, but to which till now they were not by custom admitted. Alas! replies she, what would you see in the *Shulamith*, the lowly maid, whose greatest praise is, being, as you call her, the wife of Solomon? what would you see? reply the Virgins again: We would see, as it were, the meeting of two camps; two hosts; or, as the author would have it, two choruses of dancers; *i. e.* a multitude of perfections, or rather two numerous assemblies of charms united in thee; charms both
of

of body and mind. Having then brought her back, and the ceremony of bathing being over, (for we cannot, consistently with the manners of the Hebrews, suppose it omitted, tho' no express mention is made of it), they begin to clothe her again by binding on her sandals; and adorn her probably in some careless dress, such as in those hot countries they are used to appear in, when in their private retirements; and each mingling praises with the pleasing task, they finish by braiding her hair with a scarlet ribband, if the author is right as to the scarlet, ver. 5th.; though I rather think the compliment lies in comparing her hair for value to the purple or Tyrian dye so much esteemed. The King is then admitted, and his praises are renewed: To which she modestly replies; "I am my beloved's,"—that is, I profess my ready obedience. I know thy love towards me, yet "let us go forth, &c. let us get up early to the vineyards,—there are pleasant fruits."—Thus does Solomon in the most delicate manner represent his fair one as turning away his thoughts towards their rural employments, and the plea-

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fant

fant things she had prepared for him; but concluding with wishes that she could find courage to express all her tender affection in the manner required, or were allowed to do it as she herself would chuse; “ O that thou wert as my brother!” I should find no difficulty then in presenting to thee this bowl of spiced wine, as (now) the nuptial ceremony requires, (but) which at present I hardly know how to do before so many witnesses: He would then, O daughters of Jerusalem, let me hear the wisdom of his words; he would instruct me, and, when inclined to rest, he would protect me, and repeat these tender words; “ I charge you—” [* 42.]

The

* 42. Tho’ the paraphrase, as aforesaid, is framed according to the plan which is laid down by the author of the New Translation, yet I cannot say I see an absolute necessity, from the expressions used either by the bride or bridegroom, to give it that turn; for they may, without any force, be taken in a different light. Let us suppose, for example, that the business of this Eclog is the adorning the Bride as Solomon’s Queen, and putting her into possession of the regal honours in her husband’s house; unwillingness to leave her mother’s



The seventh DAY'S ECLOG.

FOR the account of the business of this day
I shall borrow the author's own words
for the most part, and so conclude. " It
" seems

ther's quiet dwelling, and a dislike of being to be made a public spectacle, would account for all that passes in the beginning of this Eclog; and the latter part will be the expression of an humble mind, content with the life of a cottage, charmed with the conversation of a beloved object, with the joys of love, to which pomp or riches can give no addition of happiness; but to which they seem rather an impediment; and which is inclined therefore to wish that the characters of Shepherd and King so happily here united could be kept for ever separate. I cannot consider this Eclog in this latter view, without calling to mind the situation of the Christian Church, in what one may call the first days of her joyful espousals, when, rich in the midst of voluntary poverty, peace and love produced real happiness, and Jerusalem enjoyed the heavenly instructions and visible influence of her divine spouse; and had a prophetic view of the prosperity of the church, as it is called, been set before her, she would have wished to have been allowed to decline the offered honours. But I am sensible I am indulging imagination, a thing always to be feared; and therefore shall say no more.

“ seems to be appropriated to putting the finishing hand to the contract, and settling the affair of the dowry.”

This day's Eclog is opened by the Bride-maids, who see the “ Bride, (coming from the wilderness) leaning in all the fondness of conjugal affection upon her husband.” The Bridegroom coming up makes a solemn recapitulation of the contract they had entered into, and of the ratification of it by the mother. The Bride calls upon her husband, (alluding to the custom of sealing, which is immemorial), saying ; *O set me for a seal*,— requiring his inviolable observation of his promises, and assuring him that her affection for him is unalterable ; and, in return, the Bridegroom declares, that —*many waters cannot quench love*, that nothing is capable of abating his fondness and love for her. “ The affair of the dowry then comes on, where the Bride having a young sister, not yet marriageable, stipulates, (or, to speak more properly, intreats) for some reserve to be made in her favour ; and the Bridegroom declaring his consent to settle on her an handsome dowry, at her future marriage, the Bride pronoun-

“ ces

“ ces first herself, and then her vineyard, and
“ all her fortune, to be Solomon’s.

“ The whole nuptial ceremony being now
“ completed, and the bridal week expired, the
“ poem concludes with a few pastoral expref-
“ fions of mutual tenderness and affection.”

Then the Bridegroom gives the Bride notice,
that the feast being at an end, the Companions,
who listen with pleasure to her voice, must
now retire, and the charms of her discourse
must henceforth be reserved for himself alone.

[* 43.] Upon this the Bride, fearing, as it
should seem, to have detained him too long,
cries; “ Flee away, my beloved—and be—”
which words are pretty much the same as
those in which she exhorted him ch. ii. 17. to
follow his usual employments; the labours of
the field and care of his flock; [† 44.] and
leave me to perform the duties of a wife,
within the walls of thy house.

* 43. See notes on last Eclog.

† 44. We must remember that the pastoral care is
ever to be considered as implying the care of his people.
The idea of a king as shepherd of his flock. was familiar
to the antients; and not to the Hebrews only, but also
to the Greeks, Romans, &c.

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See
not

PARAPHRASE

O F T H E

SONG OF SONGS

WHICH IS SOLOMON'S.

The First DAY.

[The Bride alone, her Companions waiting at a distance, but within hearing.]

2. “**L**ET him kiss me with the kisses “ [* 45.] of his mouth;” let me ever experience his kindness and gracious condescension, his free unmerited favour to his humble handmaid; for “ O!” thy [† 46.] love, “ thou chosen one of a thousand,” is better “ far better

*45. — *Kisses of his mouth.*] “The Hebrew idiom, de-lights in redundancies of this kind; so Psal. xvii. 10. “ they speak with their mouth.” p. 51. Annot.

† 45. *Thy love.*] This apostrophe to the absent bridegroom is according to nature and the laws of poetry. See Virgil’s Eclog’s and David’s speech to Jonathan, not only absent but dead, 2 Sam. ii. 25. 26.

- “ better” than wine ; “ it comforts as a
 “ rich cordial, my trembling heart, re-
 3. “ viving my spirits,” because of the fa-
 vour, “ the fragrance” of thy good oint-
 ments, [* 47.] “ thy excellent perfecti-
 “ ons,” (for thy name is as ointment pour-
 ed forth, “ filling the house with its
 “ odour”) ; therefore do the virgins love
 4. thee. “ O !” draw me after thee !

[The Virgins come near, and say]

We will run “ also to [† 48.] the fra-
 “ grance of the perfumes.”

[The Bride rejoiced at seeing her Companions,
 informs them, (not reflecting whether they
 knew it or not), of the honour to which she is
 advanced.]

The King hath brought me into his
 chambers, “ hath raised me from a simple
 “ shepherdess to be his wife.”

VIR-

* 47. *Good ointments* ;] “ A good name is better than
 “ precious ointment.” Eccl. vii. 1.

† 48. *To the fragrance of the perfumes*] is added from
 the Septuagint and vulgate versions. The words *after*
 thee

VIRGINS.

We will be glad and rejoice in thee ;
 “ for that purpose are we appointed.”
 We will remember, “ or celebrate” thy
 love more than wine. “ Thou art eve-
 “ ry way most lovely ;” or, (as in our
 translation), the upright love thee “ for
 “ thy many virtues.”

BRIDE.

5. “ O praise me not, for little can I claim ;
 “ my person even is faulty, for” I am
 black “ from the heat of the sun ; and yet
 “ I am” comely “ too in other respects,”
 O ye daughters of Jerusalem ; “ black
 “ I am,” like to the tents of Kedar, “ co-
 “ vered with goats hair, yet comely” as
 the curtains of Solomon, “ which adorn
 “ his rich pavilion.” [* 49.]

L

Look

thee are evidently connected with *draw* me ; and not
 with *we will run*. See p. 52. of Annot.

* 49. Tho’ the Bride objects here to a fault in her
 complexion, yet we are not to suppose it anywise a
 considerable blemish in the literal sense.

6. Look not upon me, "O despise me
 "not" because I am black; "'tis not a
 "natural defect, or any fault of mine,
 "but" the sun hath looked upon me, "and
 "scorched me;" my mother's children,
 "the offspring of a former marriage,"
 were angry with me "severe unto me,"
 they made me the keeper of the vine-
 yards, [* 50.] "exposing me early to
 "the inclemencies of the weather; and
 "submission to them, to whom I owed
 "no duty; not any desire of gain made
 "me thus as it were a slave; for" mine
 own

* 50. —*Of the vineyards,*] The word is not confined to a plantation of vines; but may be a piece of ground with fruits or flowers;— "as a rose-plant in the vine-
 "yards of Engedi." So that the employments, according to the manners here described, tho' toilsome and laborious, and exposed to inconveniencies, might be such as the oppressors might justify themselves in this usage of her. Her companions might be ignorant of this part of her story, as not having spent their first years with her, tho' probably they had been with her of late.

own vineyard have I not kept ; [* 51.]
 “ that I alas ! too much neglected.”

7. Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, “ whom, absent, my thoughts are “ still present with, tell me” where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon ; [† 52.] for why should I be as one that turneth aside, “ as a wanderer” [‡ 53.] among the flocks of thy companions?

VIR-

* 51. The spiritual sense here is very evident ; we all suffer ourselves to be enslaved to this world, while we neglect the culture of our own vineyards, the improvement of our souls in virtue and holiness. Whether the circumstance here mentioned, is wholly fictitious, and only intended for ornament, and to point out this spiritual meaning, or whether it refers to any real past sufferings of the bride, is of no consequence to us, or to the understanding of the poem.

† 52. —*at noon.*] Virgil mentions the leading the flocks to rest in the shade at noon ; about ten o'clock.

‡ 53. *A wanderer.*] See the Targum, and C. D. p. 65.

VIRGINS.

8. If thou know not, O thou fairest [* 54.] among women, go thy way forth, “ follow” the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds tents.

[The Bridegroom appears, and perhaps stands looking with pleasure on the Bride, as she advances towards him; then speaks.]

9. I have compared thee, O my love, to my well trained steed in Pharaoh’s chariots, “ so beautiful is thy person; so “ graceful every motion, so gentle and “ mild is thy disposition, so ready and “ perfect thy obedience.”

Thy

* 54. —*thou fairest.*] Nothing in this book determines the complexion of the bride to be fair, rather otherwise; at least her hair seems black. The word *fair*, as with us, means beautiful.

Footsteps of the flock.] Tho’ called elsewhere a prince’s daughter, she is here plainly represented as a simple shepherdess. So Rachael, and the daughters of the prince or priest of Midian kept the sheep; Ruth gleaned among the reapers. The present manner of confining women

10. Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels; [* 55.] thy neck with chains of gold.

VIRGINS.

11. We will make thee borders [† 56.] of gold with studs of silver.

BRIDE.

12. [‡ 57.] While the king sitteth at his table, “ enjoying the nuptial feasts,”

my

women in the east was not the custom of more innocent ages.—*Thy kids.*] She herself was to feed the kids, her own flock.

* 55.—*Rows of jewels*]. Olearius describes the Persian ladies with two rows of pearl placed round the face. See A. B. p. 205. See also C. D. p. 76. referring the ornaments mentioned, as I had done, to the trappings of the horse, p. 68.

† 56.—*Borders*]; or rows: The word is the same as in the preceding verse. See C. D. p. 79. The Virgins here echo, as it were, the words of the beloved, comely with rows: Yes, we will make thee rows, (or whatever the word means), of gold adorned with silver.

‡ 57. *While the king sitteth—*]: *Until the king sitteth*, See A. B. p. 210; the time may be present or future. The posture is not expressed in the Hebrew.

my spikenard sendeth forth the sinell thereof. " His pleasure shall be the study of my life; and to approve myself to him by virtuous actions, my greatest glory."

13. " As" a bundle of myrrhe, " which preserves [* 58.] one from corruption," [† 59.] is my well-beloved unto me: [‡ 60.] It shall lye all night betwixt my breasts, " as a comfort and protection from infectious blasts."

My

* 58. Tho' I take the liberty here and elsewhere to add whole phrases, it is only where I think the same sense is included, tho' by reason of the short manner of expression in the Eastern poetry, it is not always plain enough to the English reader; and many of these passages in the Paraphrase I might have supported by citations from the Italian translation of Diodati, only that they would have rendered the notes still more bulky.

† 59.—*From corruption*]; therefore used in embalming.

‡ 60.—*It shall lye all night*]; there is no mention of *lying*, nor of *all night* in the Hebrew. The word *לָוַן*, means to lodge or abide, whether by night or

14. [* 61.] My beloved is to me a cluster
ter

or day. *He* should also here, as in many places, be rendered *it*: It shall abide or lye. That he should lye betwixt her breasts would be impossible. Besides, the indelicacy of the expression would suit ill with this poem, where tenderness and purity are so beautifully united. "The Orientals were wont, (says the Author, p. 57.) "to tie up myrrhe in little bundles, and to put them "into the bosom to exhilarate the spirits." Little bags rather, for so the word is translated, Hag. i. 6. Job xiv. 17.; in French, *un sachet*.

* 61. Verses 13. and 14. "A bundle of myrrhe is "my beloved to me: It shall be all night betwixt my "breasts. A cluster of camphire is my beloved unto "me in the vineyards of Engedi." See A. B. p. 214. 216. "If, (says he), *in the vineyards* doth not refer to "the Bridegroom, who, wherever he was, was pleasing—but to the camphire,—the lying between the "breasts is to be understood of the *myrrhe*, not of *Solomon*; as the original turn is exactly the same, the "interpretation ought, it should seem, to be the same "also." He adds; "the verb translated *he shall lye* "all night, doth not necessarily include the idea of "the night in it. Zach. v. 4. Job xxxix. 28."

What is meant by *myrrhe*, which the Septuagint renders by *σάκχιν*, is not agreed. It cannot mean flowers, as a nosegay, for such a thing between the breasts would
be

ter of cypress flowers, [* 62.] in the vineyards of Engedi, “ refreshing with its
 “ sweets: And should I even experience
 “ the bitter taste of either, yet will I re-
 “ ceive it as the token, the present of
 “ love.”

BRIDE-

be troublesome. It probably was a gum or balsam fit to burn; for it is mentioned as such, chap. iii. 6.; fit also to anoint with, either in its natural state, or rather dissolved in oil, for it is mentioned as an ingredient in the anointing oil, Exod. xxx. 23.; it was sent as a valuable present with balm, spices, &c. to Joseph, and offered to Christ. As to the *camphire* or *cypress*: A. B. supposes it to be a cluster of flowers called *alkennah*. See also C. D. p. 68. as to *it shall lye*, i. e. it shall abide; and as to דודי *doudi*, *my beloved*, being the same with *David*. See also p. 96. as to the bitter taste of the *myrrhe*, the healing quality of the *alkennah*, its smell like *camphire*. He observes also that כפר *chapher*, (whence probably the English *cover*, signifies an atonement, and כופר *choupher*, the thing here called *camphire*.)

* 62.— *Cypress flowers*]. By *cypress* here, says the author, is meant an aromatic plant, which, Sir Thomas Brown tells us, produces a sweet bush of flowers, out of which was made the famous *Oleum Cyprinum*. The vineyards of *Engedi*, near Jericho, were not so much for vines, as for aromatic shrubs; the nurseries of them were called *Vineyards*. P. 57. Annot.

BRIDEGROOM.

15. Behold, thou art fair, my love, “ my
“ dear companion ;” behold thou art
fair. Thou hast dove’s [* 63.] eyes.

BRIDE.

16. Behold thou art fair, O my beloved,
“ the guide of my youth;” and lo, how
pleasant, how green, is “ this ” our
“ flowery ” bed, [† 64.] “ this place of
“ rest from the scorching heat.”

M

BRIDE-

* 63. *Dove's eyes*]. “ They who have seen that fine Eastern bird, the *Carrier-pigeon*, will need no commentary on this place.” P. 57. Annot.

† 64.—*Bed*] Query; is not the word ערש, *arefsh*, *bed*, used here for a place of rest, descriptive of the מטה, *mete*, or couch? That the bride should have a green or flowery bed, is noways probable; much less so that she should mention it thus abruptly. See A. B. p. 227. and the same chap. vi.; Observation 19th, of *Observations on divers places of Scripture*. The size and proportions of Og’s bedstead, and the corner or angle of a bed, Amos iii. 12. where this word is used, suit, I think, better with a duan than with any bed. See note 88.

BRIDEGROOM.

17. " This is not thy abode, O thou fair-
 " est among women. The Royal Pa-
 " lace is ready to receive thee." The
 beams of our house are cedar, " which
 " fears no decay ;" and our rafters
 [* 65.] of fir, " strong and unshaken
 " by storm or tempest : Thither let us
 " haste."

2.

3.

Chap. II.

BRIDE.

- I. " Alas! I am unfit to adorn thy pa-
 " lace;" I am a " mere" rose of the
 field, [† 66.] " a simple shepherdes,"
 the lilly of the " humble" valleys.

BRIDE-

* 65.—*Rafters*]: Our roofs, our ceilings of Bruthim, trees resembling the cypress in form, the cedar in smell. The same word is translated *galleries* in the 7th chap. See A. B. p. 229.; elsewhere it is rendered *gutters* and *trenches*, to conduct water. The idea is a thing leading or conducting, I suppose, as galleries lead to several rooms.

† 66.—*Rose of the field*]. " We have here followed
 " all the antient versions in preference to those of the
 " moderns,

BRIDEGROOM.

2. " Yet" as the lilly among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.

BRIDE.

3. " If praise be comely, look on Solomon:" As the citron-tree [* 67.] among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the youths; " (for tall and upright is his stature): So please sing

" moderns, who generally interpret *Sharon* as a proper name. Yet a little attention to the context will convince us, that the Bride does not here mean to extol the charms of her person, but rather the contrary. The Bridegroom had just before called her fair: She, with a becoming modesty, represents her beauty as nothing extraordinary, as a mere common wild flower: This he, with all the warmth of a lover, denies, insisting upon it, that she as much surpasses the generality of maidens, as the flower of the lilly does that of the bramble: And she returns the compliment." P. 58. Annot. See A. B, p. 233, 238.; *Rose* and *lilly*, the meaning doubtful according to him.

* 67.—[*Citron-tree*]: תפוח *thaphou* is here rendered the *citron-tree* upon the authority of the Chaldee paraphrase;

“sing was its shade, so fragrant its per-
 “fume, so pleasant its fruit both to the
 “sight and taste, that, weary and dis-
 “tressed,” I sought for “its protec-
 “tion from the scorching heat;” I sat
 down under its shade with great de-
 light, and its fruit was sweet to my taste.

O

paraphrase; (See New Translation, p. 59. of Annotations), which observes with what superior beauty that rich fruitful plant must appear among the barren trees of the wood. It is observed that *apple-trees* are not common in the east. See A. B. p. 228, and Observation 3d. chap. 4.—*Citron-tree,—its shade,—its fruit*]: See Isa. xxxii. 2. Christ the shadow of a great rock; trust in the shadow of Egypt, a fault, Isa. xxx. 2, 3.; shadow of the Almighty, Pf. xci. 1.; dwell under his shadow, Hof. xiv. 7. *Citron*; see the Targum quoted by C. D. p. 126. He says also a veil was carried by slaves on staves over the Bride, when brought home; intimating probably the protection of the husband by the shadow, and the subjection of the wife by the veil; See note 38. Our translation of the latter part of this 3d verse, changing *his* for *its*, would do as well as what is here set down. As to Epithets, see above, p. 64.

4. O bring [* 68.] me into the house of festivity; spread the banner of love, "thy kind protection," over me!
5. Support me with flagons, [† 69.] cheer me with fragrant fruits, for I am sick with love, "too tender to be expressed!"
6. His left hand [‡ 70.] is under my head, "supporting me from fainting;" and his right hand doth embrace me, "expressing his care and protection."

BRIDE-

* 68.—*O bring me*]: The Septuagint renders it as here, in the imperative mood. It is the points which make it to be read in the præter tense.

† 69.—*With flagons*]: The radical meaning of the original word is, a stay, support, or prop, which naturally leads to a similar metaphorical sense, when applied to the mind or animal spirits. The Septuagint renders it *μύρον*, *unguents*; the Vulgate, *floribus*; both which suggest *odors*. Perhaps our translators used the word *flagon*, as the French *flacon*, for a smelling bottle. Jars full of sweets are in common use in the East.

‡ 70.—*Left hand is*]: "Literally, his left hand *shall* be; or else in the optative, O that—did embrace me!" A. B. p. 246.

BRIDEGROOM.

7. I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes [* 71.] and by the hinds of the field, “ which sporting ye “ pursue,” that ye stir not up nor wake my love, [† 72.] till willing [‡ 73.] to awake.

The

* 71.—*By the roes*]: A rural form of adjuring. It is natural to conjure a person by whatever is most affecting or valued. See Virgil, *Æneid.* lib. 4. 314. p. 60. Annot.

† 72.—*My love*]: אהבה *Aebe*, which has the feminine termination; not דודי *doudi*, which is masculine, and is the word always used by the bride. See C. D. p. 145. The word rendered *he* or *she please* is also feminine: yet he allows these passages have been, and may be understood, either as the words of Christ, or of the Church.

‡ 73.—*Till willing to awake*]: Or, as in our translation, till *he* or *she please*; *donec voluerit*, says Arias Montanus: *i. e.* Till she awake willingly, or of herself; for every one is passive in sleep.

Nothing, I presume, in the original obliges one to put these words into the mouth of the bride, as the author does; for others put them in that of the Bridegroom,



The Second DAY

[Belongs wholly to the Spouse, and is addressed by her, in a continued narration, after the Grecian manner, to the chorus of virgins, to whom she relates what had passed that morning, beginning before day-break.]

BRIDE.

8. **T**HE voice of my beloved! “ me-
“ thinks I hear it still; I see him,
“ as if here present;” behold, he co-
meth leaping upon the mountains, skip-
ping upon the hills!

9. My beloved is like a roe or a young
hart, “ sprightly and active;” behold
he

groom, which to me seems by much the most probable,
at least in the first and last places; for the posture of the
husband is described in the verse which goes before in
those two places, and is expressive of the most tender
care and protection, as one watching over a beloved
object, when composed to rest, like the fond mother
supporting her child.

he standeth behind our wall, [* 74.]
 “ the dwelling of my parents, where I
 “ had retired to spend the night;” he
 looketh through [† 75.] the windows,
 shewing himself at the lattice.

10. My beloved spake, and “ earnestly”
 said unto me, rise up, my love, my fair
 one, and come away; “ assist me in my
 “ rural toils, to which, with my compa-
 “ nions, I hasten thus early.”

11. For lo! the winter is past, the rain is
 over and gone :

12. The flowers appear on the earth ; the
 time of the singing of birds is come; and
 the

* 74.—*Our wall*]: The word is used only in Ezra
 v. 8.; and Dan. v. 5. See A. B. p. 142. He thinks it
 therefore of the Chaldee dialect.

† 75.—*Looketh forth*, says our translation; but it is
 plain the Bridegroom was without, inviting her to come
 out.

the voice [* 76.] of the turtle is heard in our land.

13. The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs; and the vines, the tender grapes, "just forming in the blossom," give [† 77.] a "delightful" smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

N

O

* 76.—*Voice of the turtle*]. This is understood by the Targum of the Holy Ghost. C. D. p. 168. A. B. supposes the time to be towards the latter end of April; p. 154.

† 77.—*Give a-smell*]. No perfume is so elegant as that of the vine-blossoms: But it is so delicate as not to be much perceived by smelling to the flowers. So that commentators have raised a difficulty from this passage, supposing the vine to have no smell: But *here* even, and still more in *France*, while the dew lies on the vines in blossom, morning and evening, the smell is delightful. So A. B. p. 138. corrects Sir Thomas Brown's mistake in this respect. The grape is plainly to be seen in the flowers, at the time they are sweetest. So Isa. xviii. 5. the grape is said to be ripening in the blossom.

14. O my dove, [* 78.] “for, like her,”
in the clefts of the rocks, “thou lovest to
“be concealed;” from the secret places of
the stairs, “[or ascents,] from thy re-
“tirement,” let me see thy counte-
nance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet
is thy voice, and thy countenance is
comely.

15. “Go on, my companions, and leave
“me here to wait her coming;” take
for us “mean while” the foxes, [† 79.]
the little foxes, that spoil the vines;
for

* 78 The modest retirement of the Bride is here compared to a dove’s nest in a rock. The word *stairs*, seems very improper: It is not so rendered in any other place, nor by the Septuagint. *Stairs* or *ascents*; viz. the going up or sides of the rock. See A. B. p. 234. There is no need to suppose a comparison between the rocks and a palace: The Dove and the Bride are the things compared; and the solitude and love of retirement is the point of comparison.

† 79. A. B. understands שְׁעָלִים *Shalim*, translated *little foxes*, the *jackals*, or *schackals*, which is a little fox, and so called; and not *young foxes*, which, tho’ very
plenty

for our vines have tender [* 80.] grapes.

16. “ To this so tender invitation too
 “ carelessly I returned answer, yet with
 “ modest submission, as became me, in
 “ words at least;” My beloved “ (said
 “ I)” is mine, “ my joy, my happiness;”
 “ and I am his, “ his humble
 “ handmaid;” he feedeth [† 81.] among

plenty in that country, are not in such numbers, or so mischievous as the others are. By *vineyards*, (for so, says he, the word properly signifies, not *vines*), he understands, as in other places, pleasure-gardens, where, however, vines were always in plenty. The speech of the Bridegroom here seems plainly addressed to his companions: And accordingly we find afterwards, that he did not himself go out to the field, tho’ he had intended so to do.

* 80.—*Tender grapes*]: The promise of a future vintage: O suffer it not to be destroyed. See the Prophet Isa. lxxv. 8.; where the promised seed is compared to the wine in the cluster, tho’ yet green,

† 81. *He feedeth*]: i. e. Leadeth his flock among lilies; the places he delighteth in. “ He shall feed his
 “ flock

mong lilies; " he delighteth in purity
 " and innocence, he seeks an unspotted
 " fame: Call me not forth therefore, ere
 " the morn appear, lest my companions
 " suppose we have passed the night to-
 " gether." [* 82.]

Until

" flock like a shepherd;" Isa. xl. 11. To suppose the *feeding* to be understood of himself, as compared to an Antelope, is too wild even for my imagination, tho' the reader by this time may perhaps think it wild enough, unless he has read A. B.

* 82. It is the custom still, as all seem to agree, among the Jews, and was so antiently, both with them and some other nations, for the new-married couple, during the feast, to pass the nights apart. The Greek church requires it still on the wedding night, tho' the day is spent, as with us, in feasting and pleasure. In antient Greece, which most certainly borrowed many of its customs from the East, one day of the nuptial ceremony was called ἀπαυλια, which Potter thus explains; because the Bride, returning to her parents house, lodged apart from the Bridegroom. It should seem also from the account of Joseph and the Blessed Virgin, that a woman betrothed, tho' in the power of her husband, lived on sometime in a state of virginity. No reason, I think, can be given for these things, but an intent to teach
 young

17. [* 83.] Until the day breathe, and the shades flee away, return my beloved, “pursue thy sports, or thy rural toils;” and be thou like a roe, or a young hart, on the mountains of Bether.

- Ch. III. “The shades of night were not yet
1. “past; I tried to return to sleep, but
“in vain; my thoughts were towards
“my beloved:” By night [† 84.]
thus

young married persons to reverence the holy state they were entered into, and to live chastely and soberly in it, restraining their passions, and obeying in all things the laws of God.

* 83. *Until the day breathe*], or *blow fresh*. In those hot countries the dawn of the day is attended with a fine refreshing breeze, more grateful and desirable than the return of light itself. See Sept. and C. D. p. 190.

† 84. *By night on my bed*]: So says our translation, and so the new translator. But he separates this account from what went before, without any authority, and places what is here related, the night following, which I think spoils the whole. Tho’ the bridegroom was abroad, it might yet be night, and by her mention of the shadows, it is plain it was so. As for her seeking, it must be taken metaphorically: Her bed, as said above, was not a place to find him in; besides she knew he was
without,

“ thus” on my bed [* 85.] I fought him whom my soul loveth: I fought him, but I found him not: “ I listened for his voice, but he was gone. Have I then chased thee from me, O thou chosen one of a thousand? have I despised thy gentle call? (thou, who couldst justly command, and needed not in-treat). Custom forbids I should pass the night with thee: But shall custom restrain my sovereign? shall I direct the wife Solomon?”

2. I will arise now, and go about the city; in the streets and in the broad ways will

without, so could not seek him there. And yet this is one of the places most apt to give offence to careless readers. *On* my bed points out her situation when seeking; על *ol, on, or upon*; if it was to point out the place in which she endeavoured to find, it should be אל *al*, i. e. *in*.

* 85. *Bed*; not ערשנו *areshinou*, as Chap. I. 17. Pf. vi. 7.; nor מטתו *metethou*, as Chap. III. 7.; Pf. vi. 7.; אפריון *apherion*, as Ch. III. 9.; but משכבי *meschichi*. See C. D. p. 194. This word is used no where else in Scripture. Isa. xxviii. 20. is another word yet.

will I seek him whom my soul loveth :
 “ Shame shall not withhold me from
 “ asking his forgiveness.” I sought him,
 but I found him not.

3. The watchers that go about the city,
 found me ; “ to whom I said,” O saw
 you him whom my soul loveth ? “ I ask-
 “ ed, but staid not for a reply.”

4. It was but a little that I had passed
 from them, when I found him whom my
 soul loveth. “ He seemed to turn from
 “ me, and was passing on : But” I held
 him, and would not let him go, until I
 had brought him into my mother’s house,
 into the chambers of her that conceived
 me : “ There, free from censure, un-
 “ der the protection of her eye, I in-
 “ vited him to rest a while. And”

5. I charge you, O ye daughters of Je-
 rusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds
 of the field, “ which sporting ye pur-
 “ sue,” that ye stir not up, nor awake
 my

my love, [* 86.] till willing "to awake."

The

* 86. It has been already observed, that the expressions here, as well as Ch. II. 7. and VIII. 4. are feminine. In those places the speech seems plainly to belong to the Bridegroom, speaking of the Bride: But here it seems to me as evidently to belong to her, as speaking of him. Perhaps the Bride, by repeating the words of her beloved, just as spoken by him, Ch. II. 7. is supposed to put her companions in mind, of the tender care he had expressed for her on a like occasion.

I have before observed, p. 94. that our translators are not singular in using the masculine gender here: But they use it in all the three places; whereas it seems to suit with this place alone, and here really to be necessary. Tho' grammatical construction should be carefully attended to; yet, where it leaves no good sense, the mind will not submit. As we have certainly no warrant to say the Hebrew text is quite free from mistakes, (See note 8. p. 21.) reason must be called in, where grammar rules are deficient, as Exod. iii. 14. "I am that I am:" But then we must be careful to make reason the judge only as far as its powers will go, and after being sufficiently informed. The being, attributes, and actions of the Deity are not to be known, but as revealed. Of these reason alone can give no account, nor grammar furnish fitting expressions.



The Third DAY.

[Solomon comes in triumph in the evening, for the ceremony of removing the Bride's veil: The Virgins are with her in the house.]

Semi-chorus of VIRGINS.

6. **W**HO [* 87.] *is* this that cometh up from the wilderness, as it were columns of smoke, fuming with myrrhe and frankincense, with all powders, “ [the “ perfumed gums],” of the merchant ?

Second Semi-chorus.

7. Behold the rich bridal pavilion of Solomon! threescore valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel.
8. They are all begirt with swords, being expert in war: Every man hath his sword upon his thigh, because of fear in the night.

O

King

* 87. See notes, p. 55.

First Semi-chorus.

9. King Solomon hath made himself a bridal-bed [* 88.] “ or chariot, [a moveable tent to abide in],” of the wood of Lebanon.

He

* 88.—*Bridal bed*——*paved with love*]: The word אפריון *apherioun*, (no where to be found but in this place), is by some rendered a *chariot*, by others a *bed*: Perhaps it partook of both; a sort of moveable bed, drawn or carried about.—In the *Mishnah* it is put for an open chariot. The *Septuagint* render it φορηον, a thing in which persons are carried. C. D. p. 219. Solomon comes in it, not as usual, in his pastoral simplicity, but in nuptial splendor. See Annot. of New Translation, p. 67.

Nothing can be more absurd than to charge this passage with indecency: *That love* for the daughters of Jerusalem which Solomon would chuse to speak of in a nuptial song, addressed to his Virgin-bride, must certainly be of the most innocent kind; and not such as would give the lie to his professions, Ch. VI. 9. of loving her alone: Yet some, even various writers, have objected to the reading of this elegant poem by young persons, on account of this, and a few other as harmless expressions. Alas! the old, not the young, are those that take offence at the language of the Scriptures: “ Except ye become as little children, &c.” is a fine observation, and is meant of an innocent unsuspicious disposition; not of a credulous ignorance.

10. He "hath" made the pillars thereof of silver, the inside of gold, the covering of it purple, the midst thereof being paved with love, "prepared as the temple of mercy and loving-kindness," for "the reception of" the daughters of Jerusalem, "Or, (as le Clerc), wrought in needle-work by the daughters of Jerusalem, as a testimony of their love."

BRIDE.

11. Go forth, O daughters of Sion, "with your lamps burning," and behold King Solomon with the crown [* 89.] wherewith his mother, "the only parent he now hath, so lately" crowned him on the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart; "go forth,

* 89. The bridal crown was in use, not only among the Hebrews, but the Greeks and Romans also. So virgins are still crowned at their espousals in *France*, and commonly by the mother, whose blessing is asked at the same time. Here the same seems to have been done to the Bridegroom.

“ forth, and bring him hither; my duty
“ is, to wait here his coming.”

[Bridegroom comes in, removes her veil before all,
crowns her with the crown from his own head,
and says,]

Ch. IV. Behold “ now” thou art fair, my love,
1. “ my sister, my spouse :” Behold thou
are fair “ indeed, thus royally adorn-
“ ed.” Thine eyes are bright and ma-
jestic, as the eyes of doves, for thy [* 90.]
veil

* 90. *Thy veil*]: צמֶתַח *tsamethac*. The same word
is used Isa. xlvii. 2. and might be there rendered *lay
aside thy veil*. See also C. D. p. 252. The name of a
virgin in Hebrew is אֵלֶמָה *alame*, *hidden*; but not so
called from the veil, as I think; for the veil was, and is,
the token of subjection in a wife, whence the expression of
a *femme covert*. In Popish countries the veil is held over
the bride in church, and, for the same reason, Rebekah
covered herself to meet Isaac. Virgins being seldom
seen abroad, had little use for a veil, not but that they
doubtless wore it sometimes, *i. e.* whenever they were
seen abroad at all. See note, p. 69. This rendering of
the word צמֶתַח *tsamethac*, is according to the New
Translation, p. 18. On what day of the nuptials the
veil was publicly laid aside, does not appear, unless from
this

veil is removed: Thy hair “ in jetty
“ curls hangs carelessly down,” as the
flocks of goats [* 91.] hang “ broufing”
from mount Gilead.

2. Thy teeth are as a flock *of sheep* that
are even shorn, *and* which come up
“ clean” from the washing, “ so white
“ and even are they:” They come up
two and two as twins; none hath lost its
fellow.

3. Thy lips are like a brede of scarlet,
and thy speech “ issuing from thence”
is charming. As the flower of the pome-
granate,

this place: Among the Greeks it was the third, as here
placed. The Bridegroom plainly claims a merit in her
beauty, having adorned her himself, and removed the
veil that hid it. In the spiritual sense there can be no
claim of beauty but from Christ.

* 91. The goats of Angora, &c. may have hair like
filk, as we are told: But here the comparison is between
the dark locks hanging carelessly, and the hanging posture
of the black goats on the side of Mount Gilead.

granate, [* 92.] “ blushing with the
“ brightest dye,” so are thy cheeks, now
thy veil is removed.

4. Thy neck is like the tower of David,
built on an eminence, “ so gracefully
“ does it rise above thy falling shoulders:
“ And whereas on that” hang a thousand
bucklers, [† 93.] shields of mighty men,
“ to guard it ; so the awful majesty of
“ thy

* 92. We have here followed Castellus. *The flower.*
In either sense the words seem to be spoken in praise of
the Bride’s modesty; her blushing *cheeks*. If we con-
sider the great reserve of women’s education among the
Hebrews, (tho’ there is no appearance of their being
confined, as now among the Mahometans), we shall not
wonder, that, on their first appearing publicly among
men, their blushes should be remarkable. In Talmudic
language the cheeks are called the pomegranates of the
face. See C. D. p. 252. “ What we translate *temples*,
“ is rendered in the New Translation *cheeks*, agreeably
“ to the Septuagint, nor will the nature of the passage
“ allow us to doubt of the justness of the version.” A.
B. p. 287.

† 93. Sandys mentions a gate so adorned; See A. B.
p. 288. *viz* with arms.

“ thy form defends thee from every wan-
“ ton glance.”

5. Thy two breasts are like two young
roes that are twins, which feed among
the lilies, “ so perfectly shaped are they,
“ so even and so white.” [* 94.]
6. Until the day breathe, and the sha-
dows flee away, I will get me to the
mountain [† 95.] of myrrhe, to the hill
of

* 94. Tho’ the Bride be a brown woman, having
dark hair; and tho’ her complexion might be hurt by the
sun, yet that her skin was white, seems to be several
times expressed.

† 95. Tho’ A. B. p. 363. understands mountains of
spices in its proper literal sense, as a place of abode;
and gathering myrrhe and spices, p. 302. as preparing
perfumes; yet, such is the force of prejudice, that,
p. 290. on this place, he adopts the notion of its being
meant of the Bride herself. But if, as the author of the
New Translation, changing *the* for *this*, we should sup-
pose the Bride to be so called, it will only shew thus
much; that the Bridegroom, comparing her sweetness
and perfections of mind and body to the richest perfumes
and spices, claims a right of possession in them. I should
rather

of frankincense, “ my usual abode, and
“ leave

rather suppose, upon comparing this verse with the last in the book, that the contrary is here expressed ; as if he should say ; “ Blush not, nor be dismayed in presence of
“ this assembly : It is but for a moment ; I will not offend
“ thy tenderness and delicacy any further ; but, till the
“ day breathe, I will get me to the mountain of myrrhe,
“ the hill of frankincense, my usual abode, and leave thee
“ with thy companions.” See note 33. p. 61. Or note 102. As for what is with us called the wedding-day, whether the preceding day, or this, or the sixth, or any of the seven, be it, is totally kept out of view in this poem. And to judge from the accounts of the wedding of Tobias, Jacob, and those recorded in other places of Scripture, it seems as if the modesty of the Hebrew customs made it be kept unknown to any but the parents ; in which it were better if christian nations would imitate them. As no religious rites are mentioned in this poem, it is probable these preceded the beginning of it, *viz.* the day before ; for it is not possible to suppose an Hebrew marriage without some religious ceremony, the paternal benediction at least, and probably that of the priest also, with suitable sacrifices. Perhaps the taking her to *be his wife* might follow immediately : We may suppose as we please. Whether the different ceremonies of the veil, &c. were, in Solomon’s time, performed on different days of the nuptial feast, as seems most probable ; or only placed so in this poem, for the pleasure of describing them, is in the end just the same.

“ leave thee to recover thy frightened spi-
 “ rits. Then will I return : Yet let me
 “ view thee once more before we part.”

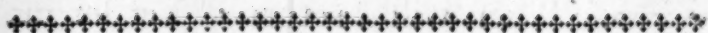
[* 96.]

7. Thou art all fair, my love, there is no
 spot in thee; “ for beauteous is thy form
 “ adorned with modesty and innocence.”

* 96. See p. 26, 27.; note 81. p. 100.; and note
 101. p. 117.

P

The



The Fourth DAY.

[The Bridegroom, in presence of her companions and his, assures the Bride of his care and protection, and attests her purity and innocence.]

8. **C**OME to me from Lebanon, my spouse; [* 97.] “come” to me from Lebanon, “the forest of wild beasts, “where thy fears seem to have placed “thee.” Look down “securely” from the top of Amana, from the top of She-nir and Hermon; from the lions dens, from “the top of” the mountains [† 98.]
of

* 97. The word כלה *chale*, Spouse or Bride, is used first here, and no more after the first of the 5th chap. See A. B.

† 98. The tops of the mountains here mentioned were places of danger: But the Bride could not literally be upon all, or indeed any one of them. But the Bridegroom here, under a beautiful metaphor, takes notice of her timorous trembling disposition, and assures her of his tender care, inviting her to his arms for protection.

of leopards; “ for I am thy protector,
“ thy sure defence: For thee I would
“ hazard my life.”

9. Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one [* 99.] “ glance” of thine eyes, with one turn of thy neck; “ or with one of those locks, which, “ like chains, adorn thy neck; for even “ the smallest of thy beauties delights “ my soul.”

10. How fair, “ how charming,” is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than “ the richest” wine, “ (tho’ justly valued as the most “ refreshing cordial);” and the smell of thine ointments “ how much better” than all spices, “ tho’ these how refreshing to the wearied spirits!”

Thy

* 99. *One eye—one look*, understood of a side-view, or profile: *In uno oculorum tuorum*; Vulg.

11. Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honey-comb, "for sweet is thy converse:" honey and milk are under thy tongue, "so gentle and endearing is every word;" and the smell of thy garments, "the report of thy virtuous deeds," is like the smell of Lebanon. [* 100.]

12. A garden [† 101.] inclosed is my sister, my spouse: A spring shut up, a fountain sealed.

13. Thy plants, " (O beauteous garden, " where all perfections spring continually! thy plants)" are an orchard of pomegranates,

* 100. *Lebanon* is the name of the forest, and of the frankincense which it produced. The metaphors here used need no comment.

† 101. Thy married women shall be modest as is a virgin newly espoused; or like the garden of Eden, where none can be admitted but the just, whose souls are carried thither by the angels. Chaldee Paraph.

These seem to have been established metaphors, applied by the Hebrews upon nuptial occasions; to signify the un sullied purity of the Bride, and the chastity and reserve she was to observe in the married state.

Among

pomegranates, with pleasant fruits, cypresses with spikenard. [* 102.]

14. Spikenard with saffron ; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrhe and aloes, with all the chief spices. [† 103.]

BRIDE,

Among the Jews at this day, before consummation, the Bridegroom puts up a prayer to God, in which is this petition ; “ Suffer not a stranger to enter into the sealed fountain, that the servant of our loves may keep the seed of holiness and purity, and may not be barren.” If the speech above is supposed to be placed, as to time, before the completing of the marriage, it must be considered as an instruction to the Bride ; if after, not as an instruction only, but as a public declaration of her innocence and chastity. Perhaps this latter notion may be found to agree best with the other parts of these Eclogs.

* 102. What is here said of the garden and its spices is plainly understood of the Spouse : But it does not hence follow, that wherever these things are mentioned, the same metaphor is intended : The contrary may be proved from Chap. VI. 2. where the Spouse speaks of the absent Bridegroom, as gone down to the garden of spices or aromatic plants ; and Chap. VIII. 14.

† 103.—*Chief spices*] : Aromatic plants. A. B. p. 289. Aloes is a sweet wood for burning, much used in the east.

Having

BRIDE, or SPOUSE.

15. O fountain [† 104.] of gardens! “ au-
 “ thor of every seeming perfection that
 “ is in me !” a well of living water, and
 streams from Lebanon, “ whose wisdom
 “ is a source of virtuous instruction, in
 “ which I continually rejoice ! O may
 “ this thy garden ever yield a grateful
 “ return, by nourishing those seeds of
 “ goodness thou art ever planting in it.”

Awake,

Having called the Bride a garden, he carries on the metaphor, and compares her virtues and accomplishments to the choicest production of an eastern orchard or paradise. She takes up the metaphor, and returns the whole praise to him, wishing she may be able to offer him any thing from this garden, worthy of his acceptance.

* 104. I have ventured to differ from the author, putting this verse into the mouth of the Spouse, as it appears there with much more propriety and beauty, than in that of the Bridegroom. See John vii. 38. A. B. observes in these three sorts of water, the first of which he takes to be that of a cistern: A beautiful gradation, says he, a cistern, a spring, a running stream. p. 298.

16.

Ch. V.

I.

16. Awake, [* 105.] O north wind,
 “ with thy refreshing gales,” and come
 thou south, blow upon my garden, that
 the spices thereof may flow out, “ that
 “ something may be performed worthy
 “ his acceptance ; then” let my beloved
 come into his garden, and eat his deli-
 cious fruits.

BRIDEGROOM.

Ch. V. I am [† 106.] come into my garden,
 I. my sister, my spouse ; I have gathered
 my

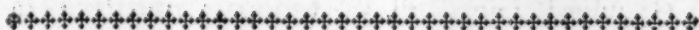
* 105. A. B. p. 300. observes on this passage, that
 the effect of heat is to dissipate the perfumes. The invi-
 tation is to the cool north wind. See however the au-
 thor of New Translation, p. 76. of Annotations.

† 106 He still replies on the same strain, and ac-
 knowledges himself already repaid by her love and du-
 tiful behaviour ; and he invites his friends to share in the
 joy of the nuptial solemnity, and rejoice in his happiness.
 This invitation of the companions shews how chaste and
 innocent the pleasures so often magnified in this song
 must be accounted ; tender friendship, social converse in
 the midst of rural delights, feasting on the fruits and pro-
 duct of the garden and fields, and a continual intercourse
 of

my myrrhe with my spices, “ have already experienced thy tender affection and “ ready obedience;” I have eaten my honey-comb, (or wild honey) with my honey, “ for I have often enjoyed thy endearing conversation;” I have drank my wine with my milk; “ I am completely happy.” Eat, O my friends, “ share in my bliss,” drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved, of our loves; “ enjoy the pleasures of the nuptial feasts “ and share in the true happiness we enjoy, of which these pleasures are only “ an outward expression.”

The

of kind offices to each other.—*I have gathered, &c.* flowers and perfumes used in feasts, See A. B. p. 301. New Translation says in the present tense, *I gather, I eat*: Both, says A. B. are consistent with the rules of Hebrew grammar. See also as to wine with milk. To drink wine with milk cannot seem strange to us, however it may appear to other nations: But besides there is nothing in the Hebrew, or even in our translation to oblige us to suppose the milk and wine mixed together, as some will have it.—*Of our loves*]: See note 145.



The Fifth DAY.

[The Bride is represented as in distress, met by the Chorus of Virgins, and telling them what had befallen her in the night.]

2. **I** Was sleeping, “ (alone on my bed),” but my heart was awake; “ my affection ever ready to turn towards the “ guide of my youth, him whom my “ soul loveth; when lo!” it is the voice of my beloved, “ said I,” that knocketh “ at my door.” Open to me, “ he “ cried,” my sister, [* 107.] my love, my dove, my undefiled; for my head is filled with dew, [† 108.] my locks with the drops of the night.

Q

“ Alas!

* 107.—*My sister*]: This name so full of tenderness is probably thus often repeated, to express the purity and disinterested affection of the Bridegroom: And the Bride makes this use of it, when she afterwards says; “ O that “ thou wert as my brother ! ”

† 108. Dews are not feared in the heat of the summer, as here: From the end of May, O. S. to the middle

dle

3. “ Alas! (replied I, fearing censure if
“ I let him in),” I have put off my vest,
how [* 109.] shall I put it on, “ thus
“ in the night?” I have washed my feet,
how shall I defile them?

4. My beloved put in his hand by the
hole [† 110.] “ of the door, to lift up
“ the

dle of September they make their beds on house-tops,
&c. See A. B. p. 312. Yet so early as April, which is
supposed to be the time here represented, and towards
the rising of the sun, the dews must be considerable.

That the whole is a poetic fiction, tho’ intended to ce-
lebrate a real marriage, appears plainly from the things
mentioned here, which cannot possibly be understood li-
terally of Solomon and his Bride. As for the fancy of
some, who would understand this whole account of a
dream; and that of the author of the New Translation,
who supposes it a real account of things happening with-
in the compass of the palace-gardens; I think them too
wild to be admitted. The beautiful simplicity of the
poem is lost by such forced interpretations.

* 109. *How shall I?*: As much as to say *I cannot*.

† 110. The door is represented as that of a cottage,
where unsuspecting honesty needs no bolt: But the mo-
dest reserve of the Bride had made her secure it. A
latch with an hole thro’ to lift it up is in common use in
the country still.

“ the latch : But the door was fast lock-
 “ ed within ; then ” my bowels were
 moved for him.

5. I rose up to open to my beloved, and
 my hands dropped myrrhe, and my fin-
 gers sweet-smelling [* III.] myrrhe,
 “ (for in my haste I had overthrown it);”
 they dropped upon the handles of the
 lock “ that perfume which should have
 “ anointed his head.”

6. I opened to my beloved : But my be-
 loved had withdrawn himself “ and”
 was gone, “ for I had staid too long,
 “ though ” my soul failed when he spake.
 I sought him, but I could not find him :
 I called him, but he gave me no answer.

7. The watchers that go about the city
 found me ; “ for I followed my beloved
 “ even here into the streets of the city ;”
 they

* III. The Bride here expresses the greatness of her
 affection by the costliness of the unguent she brings for
 him ;—this was precious myrrhe.

they smote me, they hurt me. [* 112.]
The keepers of the walls took my veil off
from me.

8. I charge you, O ye daughters [† 113.]
of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that
you tell [‡ 114.] him, that I am sick of
love.

[The Chorus of Virgins, seeing she does not attend
who they are, seem also not to know her, in or-
der to make her describe the object of her so ear-
nest enquiry.]

VIRGINS.

9. What is thy beloved more than another
beloved, O thou fairest among women?
what

* 112.—*Hurt me*]: The word does not always signify
wounds, but sometimes *cuts* or *stripes*.

—*Took my veil off*]: Not to be understood of taking it
from her, but taking it off to see her face.

† 113. Every woman she met was probably a daugh-
ter of Jerusalem; the calling them therefore by this
name does not imply that she knew them for her com-
panions.

‡ 114. What should you tell him? tell him that I am
sick with love. C. D. p. 354.

what is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?

SPOUSE.

10. My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.
11. His head "is as" the most fine gold, "its worth not to be known:" His locks are curled "and" black as the raven.
12. His eyes "are" as "the eyes of" doves, "which are shining as silver," washing themselves by the rivers, [* 115.] or bathed (as it were) in milk; "and" "like sparkling gems" fitly set.
13. His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: His lips like lilies; "yet" "not like them ill-favoured, but" dropping [† 116.] sweet smelling myrrhe.

His

* 115. Sitting by the waters, or rivers of waters: Here what is said relates to the dove, not to the eyes of Solomon. See C. D. p. 376. See also above, p. 68.

† 116. The dropping myrrhe should be referred to the lips themselves: C. D. p. 384. says, that the construction

14. His hands [† 117.] are as gold-rings set with the beryl : His belly [‡ 118.] (or body) as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires, “ so beautifully is it adorned by “ the blueness of the veins.”

His

struction is not with *lilies*, but with *lips*. The lily here meant is the scarlet lily, or martagon. Pliny mentions a red lily much esteemed in Syria.

* 117. Perhaps by the richness of the ring or bracelet, made more rich by being adorned with jewels, is meant that his hands, beautiful in themselves, are still richer in their generous and charitable disposition of the riches they are masters of.

† 118. The word מַעַי *maïou*, is most commonly rendered *bowels* both literally and metaphorically. Sometimes it is rendered the heart, and other inward parts, and sometimes it is put for the hollow which contains them, *i. e.* for the *body*, by which word it would be best rendered here ; for I suppose in those hot countries it could not be reckoned offensive for some parts of the body to be seen. A garment fastened on one shoulder, and leaving the right arm, breast and shoulder at liberty, seems to have been looked upon by the ancients as an elegant dress for a shepherd. Naked arms are mentioned as the affectation of young men as low down as Ephrem Syrus's time : And to go naked is a common expression in Scripture for the dress of a slave or labouring man.

15.

16.

Ch. VI.

I.

15. His legs are as pillars of marble set upon sockets of fine gold, “so firm and “steddy do they appear, adorned with “glittering sandals.” His countenance is as Lebanon, [*119] “awful and majestic,” excellent as the cedars.
16. His mouth [†120.] is sweetness itself: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O ye daughters of Jerusalem; “my friend, “which is as my own soul.”

VIRGINS.

- Ch. VI. Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou
1. fairest among women? whither is thy be-
loved

* 119. That goodly mountain Lebanon: So Moses; and so modern travellers mention its awful appearance and stately trees.—*Cedars* “the country people call *Errs*, “which is very near the sound ארז *arez*, the original “word here” A. B. p. 320.

† 120.—*Mouth*]. The same word translated *taste*, ch. II. 3. and rendered the *palate* or roof of the mouth, ch. VII. 9.—*Sweetness*. Hebrew, *sweetnesses*.

loved turned aside, that we may seek him with thee?

[The Spouse, recollecting where he might be.]

2. My beloved is "doubtless" gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies.

3. I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine: He feedeth among the lilies.
"The sweet perfume of virtuous deeds,
"the purity and innocence of chaste love,
"these are his delights."

[The Bridegroom meets them going to the garden.]

4. Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah; graceful as Jerusalem, awful as an army with banners. [* 121.]

Turn

* 121. The original word אִימָה *aimé*, in the few places where it is found, carries always with it the idea of awe or terror; and nothing of blaze or light; therefore it ought not to be rendered *dazzling*, as the author would have it; nor the banners be taken for shining beacons, as A. B. would have them rendered. Could modern ideas admit

5. Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me. Thy hair is as a flock of goats that hang [* 122.] upon Mount Gilead.
6. Thy teeth are as a flock of sheep which go up from the washing, which are all of them twins, and none has lost its fellow.
7. As the flower of the pomegranate, so are thy cheeks, " whenever I gaze on " thee, now" thy veil is removed.
8. " In my palace are" threescore [† 123.] queens, and fourscore concubines, and

R virgins

admit of a virgin Bridegroom, as well as of a virgin Bride, an awful terror in presence of the beloved object would not seem strange even in an eastern Monarch. See the word *אִמָּה* *aimé*, Gen. xv. 12. there rendered *horror* of great darkness. This passage is finely illustrated by a modern Poet:

" Awfully gay as glittering hosts appear ;
" Magestically sweet, and amiably severe."

See New Translation, annot. p. 80.

* 122.—*hang upon Gilead.*] See annot. p. 70; Houbigant, &c.

122.—*threescore—and fourscore.*] these might suit the state of a Monarch, though one alone, *i. e.* his Bride, engaged

- virgins without number ; “ the spoils of
 “ war in my father’s time, the purchase
 “ of my treasure, or fallen to me as my
 “ regal inheritance : But” one, [* 124.]
 9. “ one alone is” my dove, my undefiled ;
 “ she stands alone in my affections :” She
 is the “ beloved” one of her mother, the
 choice one of her that bare her. The
 daughters saw her, and blessed her, the
 queens and the concubines, they praised
 her, “ when first she appeared among
 “ them, saying ;” [* 125.]

Who

gaged entirely his affections. This passage is a proof
 that the book was wrote in the beginning of his reign,
 for we afterwards read of a thousand.

* 124. The transposal of the word *one*, (which in the
 original stands first, as here placed,) spoils the sense:
 To say she is one, one woman, has no meaning ; but to
 say, one of all these is my only love, is plain. As for the
 application of this passage to the unity of the church, there
 is more propriety in it as here expressed, than as in our
 translation, in which the transposition of words has often
 obscured the sense. See Note 39. p. 70.

125. We often lose the sense of passages in Scripture
 for want of this word, *saying*, to connect them. The
 short

10. Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, [* 126.] awful as an army with banners?

The

short broken manner of the eastern languages we are not enough used to. See Proverbs xxxi. 28.

* 126. C.D. p. 432. explains the morning, moon and sun, of the three states of the church; the patriarchal, the dawn; the law, a light reflected; the gospel, the sun of righteousness. If this be allowed, the following expression, *awful as an army*, may be referred to the coming with Christ at the last day.



13.

13.

13.

- 13.

13.

13.

CHORUS.

13. Return, return, O Shulamite, return,
return, that we may look upon thee;
“that we may freely gaze on all thy
“charms.”

BRIDE.

What would you see in the Shulamite;
[* 128.] “the humble maid, whom Solo-
“mon has thus exalted?”

VIR-

noted for swiftness, or for a dubious uncertain course, cannot be known. But the comparison as to the Bride seems to be, that she was wandered from the place she went to. In some countries it is the custom for the Bride to hide herself entirely. And tho' this may truly be called affectation, it certainly had its rise from this observation, that modest fear was the constant attendant of youth and innocence. When the corruption of manners made real bashfulness more rare, imitation supplied the place where it was wanting; for custom required the one or the other; and falsehood, though always grounded upon truth, generally goes beyond it.

* 128. If it be thought improper that Solomon should put so many lowly expressions in the Bride's mouth, and still more that I should add to them, who have defended

his

VIRGINS.

“What would we see? why;” as it were the meeting of two camps; [* 129.] “two choruses of perfections united in “thee.” (See p. 72.)

[Having

Ch. VII.
I.

his politeness on a former occasion; let it be remembered, that right reason, the law of God, and the manners of the times, require it. Tho' the Bride were Pharaoh's daughter, yet would she be considered as the king's handmaid; not indeed as the servant of his loves, as in the Jewish prayer above, but as an help meet for him. Some remaining sign of the wife's subjection is expressed with regard to the Kings of Europe; their Queens, on their first approach, always waiting them on their knees. Had Solomon represented his wife less humble, he had not done her justice. But to represent her as scourged by his slaves, as the author does, p. xx. of Introduction, is quite another thing.

129. The word in Hebrew is מַחֲנַיִם *mahanaim*, and certainly means not *two armies*, or *two troops of dancers*, but *two camps*: See Gen. xxxii. 2. excluding, I think, absolutely, the improper ideas, by which the author and others would fain explain it. The simple idea is that of a multitude, as applied in the Paraphrase. See p. 72. and 73.

[Having attended her in the bath [* 130.] in some retired apartment, they praise her beauty, while they put on her rich sandals, and clothe her, probably with some thin, careless dress, after the eastern manner, when in their private retirements; preparing her for the coming of the Bridegroom.]

Ch. VII.

FIRST VIRGIN.

I. How beautiful are thy feet [† 131.]
with

* 130. Bathing was a constant custom among the Jews, especially after walking out, on account of the heat and dust. Therefore, tho' not mentioned, we cannot suppose it omitted here. Besides, as is mentioned above, among the Jews of Barbary, this is performed with particular care on the eve before the marriage: Here it is perhaps placed later. See p. 25. As the Bride is supposed to have wandered to some distance, her feet, or shoes, could not so well be the subject of admiration before washing; which was used before every common meal. The author allows the ceremony of this day might probably be put off to this time, on account of the Bride's modesty, and her unwillingness to be made a public show of to her companions, as the circumstances of it required.

131.—*feet with shoes:*] “feet shod with the preparation of the gospel.” These ideas have nothing elegant to us, rather otherways; yet a well-shaped foot, fresh from the bath, and adorned with a sandal bound on with
rib-

with shoes, O Prince's [* 132.] daughter,
 "so lovely in themselves, so curiously a-
 "dorned!"

SECOND VIRGIN.

The joints [† 133.] of thy thighs are
 like jewels "or carved work," the work
 of the hands of a cunning workman,
 "so polished and finely turned they ap-
 "pear when in the water."

THIRD

ribbands, after the eastern manner, is, even when re-
 presented in a picture, a pleasing object.

* 132. Whether we understand this of Pharoah's
 daughter, or of the child of one of the Hebrew princes,
 it shews her birth not unworthy of Solomon; and conse-
 quently that the character of one going after the flocks
 is only fictitious, suiting a pastoral poem, and the manners
 of ages not very far remote from Solomon's days.

† 133. These eastern metaphors are said to be still in
 use at a wedding-feast, and pleasing to *their* imagina-
 tions, however uncouth they may sound to us. They
 seldom are intended to answer in more than one circum-
 stance of resemblance: The particulars are endeavoured
 here to be pointed out in the paraphrase. So, in the for-
 mer chapter, the comparison of the goats is chiefly, as
 to

THIRD VIRGIN.

2. Thy navel [*134.] is as a round goblet, “ which wanteth not mingled wine :
 “ and fruitful mayest thou be as is the
 “ vine of Sibmah!”

S

FOURTH

to their hanging from the top or head of the mountain, tho' some extend it to the silky softness of the goats hair in those countries. In the pomegranate, the blushing colour is considered : But in the flock of sheep several ideas are joined, and give altogether a fine description of a beautiful set of teeth. Query, May not the turning of the thighs, here translated *joints*, be understood of the shape ; as we say, a fine turned statue ; and in French, *la tournure* ? The mention of a cunning workman seems to imply something of this kind.

*134. The parts of the body here praised are seldom mentioned among us ; not on account of any thing indecent in them, but rather as low, vulgar, and unpleasing. But the Grecian and Roman statues, which shew the dress in use among them, and which express the shape of the body, are proofs, as well as many things said in their books, that the case was not the same with them. The goblet and heap of wheat are not introduced for any outward resemblance, but as emblems of fertility ; a blessing to be wished for in every married woman ; and which was particularly

FOURTH VIRGIN.

Thy belly is as an heap of wheat
[*135.] set about with lilies : “ And
“ may

particularly desired by the Hebrew women, on account of the promise made to the seed of the woman ; to the offspring of Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Judah ; and more particularly to the family of David, and to Solomon amongst all his children. The English word *like*, used in the former verse, and in the next to this, is perhaps rather too strong to express the Hebrew note of comparison, as seeming rather to confine the sense to an outward resemblance. The expression, both Hebrew and English, is different in this verse, and very properly so ; for the comparisons here are not at all as to the outward appearances. Note also, it might be rendered as a wish ; may it be as a plenteous goblet, as an heap of wheat ! as is expressed in the Paraphrase, C. D. p. 462. “ Let there not want mixture.”

The Spirit, as represented by a spring of water, is said to flow from Christ ; the cup of blessing from his spouse the church, and that a mixed cup, in opposition to the cup of wrath, which is unmixed ; Rev. xiv. 10. These texts, compared with many others, shew the particular reason why these things are mentioned among the perfections of the Bride.

*135. Wheat and barley were among the antient Hebrews emblems of fertility ; and it was usual for the
standers

“ may the offspring of thy chaste love be
 “ as the produce of the harvest !”

FIFTH

standers by to scatter these grains upon the new married couple, with a wish that they might increase and multiply. See Selden's *Uxor Hebraica*. Bredone, in his *Tour* through Sicily and Malta, mentions that in Sicily, (an island long inhabited by the Saracens,) a custom of throwing wheat at the Bride and Bridegroom is still kept up, and explained to be a wish, or rather superstitious charm, to procure fertility. And from hence, as in many other instances, may be observed, how usages are preserved, and at the same time degenerate into superstition, when the first intention of them is lost. Wheat *hedged* with lilies, says C. D. p. 464. Perhaps there is here an allusion to a custom still in use as near as France, of laying wheat in granaries, and placing thorns round it, to keep off vermin ; but here the hedge is said to be of lilies, expressing inward purity, and outward beauty.

The word *בֶּטֶן* *beten*, *belly*, tho' commonly translated as here, is however often rendered the *womb*, but not confined to the female sex ; the *bowels*, the *inward parts*. See, 1 Kings, vii. 20. the hollow part of the pillars so called.

Some would understand this verse, and ch. v. 14. of garments embroidered, as thinking it more modest. If it can be so rendered, without force to the sense of the original, I am well pleased so to take it: But perhaps,
 had

FIFTH VIRGIN.

3. Thy two breasts are like two young
 roes that are twins ; “ so equally match-
 “ ed, so beautiful are they.”

SIXTH

had these writers considered the daughters of Jerusalem as alone present, and the circumstance of coming from the bath, they would not have looked upon the passage as any way indecent. The present customs of the Jewish women in their frequent and superstitious washings, require the most absolute nakedness, and it is not possible they should always be alone on such occasions. Lady M. Wortley Montague, as to the Turkish women, gives such a description of bagnio, at the reception of a Bride, as even raises a blush: But far be it from me to suppose the situation of a modest Israelite in the midst of her companions, to be like either of these ; yet she might, I should think, leave her cloaths, for bathing, without offence. And as for the words used, there is nothing more indecent in them than in St Luke xxiii. 29. “ Blessed “ is the womb that bare thee, and the paps that thou “ hast sucked.”

The choice of these metaphors, which cannot, as already observed, be, because of any outward resemblance, is not only on account of their fitness to express fertility, by the cup full of the fruit of the vine, and the
 produce

SIXTH VIRGIN.

4. Thy neck is as a tower [*136.] of ivory, “gracefully lifted on high, and “shining by its whiteness.”

SEVENTH VIRGIN.

5. Thine eyes are like the fish-pools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bethrabbim,
“re-

produce of the harvest heaped up in the granary, two of the richest ideas in nature, and most familiar to the people of the east: They have probably also a farther meaning, and that a moral one. For as in the holy Eucharist, it is observed, that the bread formed of many grains, and the wine the juice of many grapes, are symbols of that union among Christians so solemnly professed at that holy feast: So the same instruction was here conveyed to the faithful of the Jewish church, that, considering themselves as the offspring of one womb, nourished from one source, they might love as brethren.

*136. Commentators have amused themselves in seeking this tower of ivory, which could no where exist, nor is needful from the comparison. Thy neck is like a tower, *i. e.* like any tower, for its graceful situation; but it is exceeding white, therefore the tower should be of ivory.

[* 137.] “reflecting the light from an
“open, clear, smooth surface.”

EIGHTH VIRGIN.

Thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon,
which looketh toward Damascus, “pla-
“ced on high, and shaped with art.”

NINTH VIRGIN.

5. Thine head upon thee is like Mount
Carmel, “rising majestic ;” and the hair
of thy head “to be valued” as the
purple, “which is weigh’d against gold.”

TENTH VIRGIN.

“But lo,” the king, detained in the
galleries, “waits our call.”

The BRIDEGROOM enters.

6. How fair [† 138.] and how pleasant
art

* 137. *Bethrabbim*, a gate of the city of *Heshbon*, lead-
ing to *Rabbath*. Jer. XLIX. 3. See C. D. p. 468.

† 138.—*fair and pleasant*—for delights:] as in our
translation, seems to convey an idea, which is not in the
original.

art thou, "thus careless, yet adorned,"
O thou engaging love, "thus formed to
"please."

7. This thy stature is like to a palm-tree,
and thy breasts to the clusters "of
"dates!"

8. I said I will go up to the palm-tree ;
[* 139.] I will take hold of the boughs
thereof. Now also thy breasts shall be
as

original. The word for *delights* is no more than an epithet connected with *O love* ; as who should say, *pleasing love*, or *charming love*, or *delightful love* : But none of these sound well in our language, which obliges us to make use of a paraphrase. But then it should always be such as retains the original idea, not one which introduces an idea foreign to the subject.

* 139. The fruit of the *palm-tree*, its clusters of *dates*, cannot be gathered without going up, for they grow all at the top ; but the bark is like steps from the growth of every year, which makes it easy to climb up. See p. 64. This is the idea here alluded to. The clusters mentioned in the following comparison are clusters of the vine, not of the palm-tree ; therefore the former and latter parts of this verse ought not to be connected in one idea ; the latter part should rather be put to begin the 9th verse.

- [* 140.] as the clusters of the vine, which
 “ yields sweet fragrance and precious
 “ liquor. Thy breath,” the smell [† 141.]
 of thy nose is like the fruit of the citron;
 9. And the roof of thy mouth like [† 142.]
 the best wine, for my beloved, that goeth
 down sweetly, causing the lips of those
 that are asleep to speak.

The BRIDE.

10. I am my beloved's ; “ in this alone I
 “ glory ;” and his desire is “ fixed” up-
 on

* 140. “ Let thy breasts be as the clusters of the
 “ vine.” C. D. p. 487.

† 141. These expressions,—“ smell of thy nose” here,
 and—“ roof of thy mouth” in the next verse, tho' they
 seem uncouth to us, are familiar to the eastern nations.
 The smell of the nose is the breath ; the roof of the
 mouth stands for the sound of the voice, and even for the
 discourse. To speak of a fine taste or sharp wit, would,
 I suppose, seem as strange to many nations. The word
 here translated *roof of the mouth*, is rendered the *mouth*,
 Prov. v. 3. VIII. 7. Cant. v. 16.

† 142. “—like the best wine going לְדֹדִי *ledoudi*, to,
 or for, my beloved, sweetly, or uprightly, causing the
 lips

on me. “ I want no proof of thy affection : but”

T

Come,

“ lips of the sleepers, or aged, (for so the word is often rendered,) to speak.” If the word *לדודי* *ledoudi* were away, what follows would be connected with what is said of the wine, just as the same expressions stand, Prov. xxiii. 31. where *uprightly* is rendered by *it moveth itself aright*; or if the *י* *jod* was left out or changed, and we could read *to the beloved*, or *to thy beloved*, a clearer sense might be obtained. The words, tho’ every where else they are appropriated to the Bride, are here by all commentators, &c. put into the mouth of the Bridegroom; and tho’ they differ widely in their interpretations, they, none of them, as far as I can judge, give any satisfactory sense to the passage; I have therefore left it as it is in our own translation, being myself persuaded that it is one of those few texts where some error has crept in. Were I to indulge my own fancy, I would place a full stop after the word *wine*, ending there the comparisons; the rest I would read thus;—“ going
“ to *the* beloved, or to *thy* beloved, in uprightness, *i. e.*
“ with a majestic air; the grace of thy motion expressing the steadiness of thy constant mind, the aged themselves seemed to awake as out of sleep, and their lips
“ were filled with thy praises.” This is the very compliment which Homer pays Helen, and may be supposed to carry us back to the meeting in the first chapter, or to suit some such occasion. The opinion of a person
much

much better skilled than myself in these questions, I shall also give the reader in his own words.

“ As, says he, all our modern translators and expositors, (for the antient versions I shall take notice of after,) have failed, at least as far as I have opportunity to make the research, in giving any tolerable solution to the difficulties of this text, one is naturally led, and seems more at liberty to try what else can be done. In the first place then, it appears somewhat unaccountable to me, that they all should agree in putting the word *לדודי* *ledoudi* into the mouth of the Bridegroom, contrary to Hebrew grammar, and the whole tenor of this Song in particular, it being confessedly masculine, and the peculiar appellation given by the Bride, speaking to, or of, her BELOVED. When, upon your first desiring my sentiments on this text, I proposed a change of the speaker here, you objected the impropriety of the Bride’s being supposed to praise herself: But this, I thought, as I still think, may be sufficiently obviated by some such short paraphrase as is often necessary to be supplied, (and which one cannot help doing mentally,) in many other parts of the Song beside, to accommodate the short eastern stile of poetry to our conception and manner of expression: And I would therefore think it necessary to divide the verse thus;

Bridegroom continuing his praises of the Bride from
the last verse, says;

And the roof of thy mouth like the best wine.

Bride,

Bride, blushing at the praises he bestows upon her,
 hastily stops him from going on, and catching the
 last metaphor he used, replies;

To (or for) my beloved "indeed" it goeth down
 sweetly; "through his partial kindness to me, my con-
 "versation is thus pleasing to him." This manner of
 interpreting the verse I proposed, as I still do, with diffi-
 dence, quite unsupported as I am by any authority; yet
 I own I think it more eligible than any thing else I have
 met with, and especially when I come to consider the
 Septuagint version of the latter part of the verse. Here,
 tho' attempted differently by different persons, among
 the moderns, no satisfactory sense has hitherto been
 offered by any one: And this may, perhaps justly, fur-
 nish a suspicion of some small error, such as might arise
 from the change of a letter or two having crept into the
 Hebrew text. And indeed this suspicion is strongly con-
 firmed by the Septuagint, (with which the Vulgate near-
 ly agrees, and, says the author of New Translation, the
 Syriac, Aquila, Symmachus,) having, as is evident, had
 another reading, different from ours, in the copy from
 which they translated. Nor does it seem a matter of much
 difficulty, to trace out what their reading was, and theirs,
 or ours, to have been occasioned by the change of two let-
 ters into their similars: For **דובב** *doubeb*, *loquifaciens*,
 the change of **ד** *daleth* into **ר** *resh* makes **רובב** *roubeb*,
 (which derives from **רבע** *rebeb*, by analogy of gram-
 mar, as **דובב** *doubeb* does from **דבע** *dabeb*;) and this
 the

the Septuagint renders, I think very justly, *ἱχαρευμενος*, *satisfying*. For **ישני** *ishenim*, *dormientium*, they must have read **ישניו** *oushenim*, by the change of ' *jod* into ' *vau*. According to this reading, their translation seems to me literal and exact, and it agrees exceedingly with the manner of reading the verse which I propose; thus, "It goeth down sweetly to my beloved, satisfying the lips and teeth." That the Septuagint, and these other ancient versions, have read otherwise than we do in our copies, is manifest: But when their reading bears a good sense, why should we go farther, with P. Houbigant and the author of N. Translation, to make unnecessary and imaginary changes of the text? I would by no means put the Septuagint in the least degree of competition with the Hebrew original, when the sense of this is plain, tho' differing from the former: But where there seem to be unsurmountable difficulties in the original Hebrew, as in the present case, and perhaps some few other passages of as little consequence with regard to any point of doctrine or practice, I do think the Septuagint is by all means first to be had recourse to, as the best subsidiary help; and to reconcile it with the original, (as has been done beyond expectation in numbers of instances,) is a labour much more useful and satisfactory than that of any other far-fetched and seemingly unjustifiable emendations of the sacred text that can possibly be proposed. When the public is favoured with Mr Kennicot's labours, it may be hoped they will throw light upon this and such other dark passages. The putting the latter part of the 9th verse into the mouth of the Bride seems to me to add a peculiar

11.

12.

11. Come, my beloved, let us [* 143.] go forth, into the field, let us lodge in the villages. [† 144.]
12. Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourisheth; whether the

peculiar energy and grace to the following rapturous expression of love and esteem in the 10th verse, "I am my 'beloved's, &c." I know not if you shall see it in the same light.

Having mentioned Prov. xxiii. 31. I cannot help observing, that if the word *when*, which is in Italick, were left out of that passage, the sense would be better: It would then stand thus; "Look not upon the wine; (*i.e.* "gaze not earnestly on it,) when it is red, when it "sparkles in the glass; it moveth itself aright," it is not to be blamed for the desire it may excite; but, if indulged to intemperance, then at the last it biteth like a serpent, &c. No fault is to be charged upon the blessings our Creator has provided, they move aright, or in uprightness; the fault is in ourselves.

* 143. The New Translator and A. B. p. 338. agree in giving an indelicate turn to these expressions: Yet they are point blank opposite as to the dispositions they suppose in the persons that use them.

† 144.—*villages*:] or by the *cyprus-trees*, בנפרים *bechapherim* signifies both. See ch. i. 14. iv. 13. See also C. D, p. 501.

the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth. "There shalt thou partake with me in a rural repast;" there will I give thee my loves, [* 145.] "the bridal offerings of my hands."

13. "For" the mandrakes [† 146.] give a smell, and at our gates "are" all manner of

* 145. I can see no reason why *my loves*, אֶת דְּוֹדִי *ath-doudi*, here, should be understood in a different sense from *our loves*, ch. v. 1. of which the companions were invited freely to partake; and which therefore we conclude was some part of the feast, or a metaphor expressing the joy of it. Possibly as the sin-offering was called a *sin*, and the peace-offering *peace*, so the sacrifices on which they feasted at a wedding with their drink-offerings, might bear the name of *loves*.

Query, Would not this and the following verse read better? "There will I give, O my beloved, unto thee, (now in my turn) the sweet-smelling mandrakes, the pleasant fruits." For there is, I think, plainly a connection between the things given, and the things laid up in store.

† 146. What the *mandrakes* are here, or Gen. xxx. 14. (the only places where they are mentioned,) has puzzled the learned, and produced strange conjectures. It is plain,

of pleasant “ fruits,” new and old,
“ which” I have laid up for thee, O my
beloved !

The BRIDE recollecting herself.

Chap. VIII.

I. O [* 147.] that thou wert as my brother

plain, I think some fragrant fruit or flower is so called, tho’ we know not what, and we need seek no farther. See also A. B. p. 339. and 341. where they are said to have a bad smell : But the things here mentioned, as observed already, seem evidently commended as smelling sweet.

The mention of new and old fruits shews what she was to give him. The making of presents to each other is a custom at the wedding. The little inconsistencies of the Bride’s speech, are, I think very beautiful, and suit the simplicity of pastoral. It is not the speech of an artful dissembler, but the childish innocence of one who knows not what to say.

* 147. Leaving what she had been saying, she seriously expresses her wish, that, as a sister to a kind brother, she might shew the extreme fondness of her heart in all its purity and innocence ; enjoy the instructions of his mouth, as her guide, and the man to whom wisdom had been expressly given by God ; and remain under his
care

ther [*148.] that sucked the breasts of my mother, I should find thee without, “returning from the field;” I would kiss thee, yea “and” I should not be despised, “or censured for it.”

2. I

care and kind protection: Then, turning to her companions, and repeating the words with which two former Eclogs had ended, this also concludes.

* 148. As the Jews abhorred incest, the words *brother* and *sister*, would never be used so frequently between husband and wife, and particularly so in this Song, if it were not to express the chastity and innocence of their affections, and remind them continually of their duty. *My infant-brother*, the expression which the author uses, is not, I think, so proper here. The circumstance of sucking is only mentioned to shew, that not a relation only, but a brother in the nearest degree, is meant; the brother by the mother as well as the father. Here A. B. himself, p. 344. observes the difference of antient and modern customs in the east, and quotes as a proof Gen. xxix. 11. where Rachel receives the salute of a stranger, (calling himself her cousin,) without offence: He therefore rejects the addition of the word *infant*, (which the New Translator puts in,) as improper and unnecessary. Her own mother’s son, as I have said, is the point insisted upon, not his age.

2. I would lead thee, and bring thee into my mother's house, "our humble dwelling:" There thou [*149.] wouldest instruct me. I would cause thee to drink, " (not this nuptial cup which now we are " to divide, [†150.] and which, with a " trembling hand, I offer, but,)" spiced wine, and the juice of my pomegranates.

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* 149.—*thou would'st instruct me :*] So Bishop Hall, and so Arias Montanus, *docebis me*, referring the instruction to the husband, not to the mother. The pronoun *who* (in our translation) is not in the original. It would seem to be a want, if in a poem concerning Solomon no mention should be made of his wisdom; which, as he received it from heaven, he justly might, and in other places does, freely speak of, as of his greatest glory. See the Targum, C. D. p. 521. Vulgate, Pagninus, Montanus, &c. Ambrose, Theodoret. A. B. p. 347. says, " The word " in the third clause of verse 2: may certainly as well " be understood to mean the second person masculine as " the third person feminine, as those that understand the " grammar of the Hebrew language well know."

† 150. Dividing the nuptial cup is still in use in the Greek-church. Nuptial cup delivered by the Bride acknowledging him for her husband. See C. D. p. 522. Wine of pomegranates, A. B. p. 347.

3. His left hand "should be" under my head, and his right-hand should embrace
4. me, "saying," I charge you, O daughters of Jerufalem, that you stir not up, nor awake my love, till willing "to awake."

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The seventh DAY.

THE MARRIAGE-CONTRACT.

The BRIDE and BRIDEGROOM come forward together.

The CHORUS of VIRGINS say ;

5. Who [* 151.] is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved ?

BRIDE-

*151. The Septuagint reads, " Who is this that " cometh up in white ;" which suits well, but shews how far that translation goes sometimes from the original Hebrew, where there is nothing to answer to that expression, unless the Hebrew copy they used differed from ours. C. D. p. 525. says, an Arabic word is used here. The word *leaning* also, he says, is only used in this place ; and from the use of the word in the Arabic some render it *fainting, associating, cleaving* to her beloved.

The Ethiopic, he says, agrees with our translation.

BRIDEGROOM.

I raised thee up from under the citron,
 “ where was thy former dwelling, to be
 “ my spouse ;” there thy mother brought
 thee forth, “ or plighted” thee “ unto
 “ me ;” there she brought thee forth that
 bare [* 152.] thee.

BRIDE.

* 152.—*that bare thee :*] seems to suppose the expression *brought thee forth* to mean something different : But, says the author, if they must be understood of child-bearing, it may in a figurative way, as of the pangs she felt, when parting with her to an husband.

“ This verse, (says the author, p. 91.) has great difficulties in it. All the Greek Fathers, and many of the Latin, attribute them to the Bridegroom : (See Patrick.) But the Hebrew writers in general assign them to the Bride, on account of the η *thee*, which, as the Masorets have pointed it, is of the masculine gender. Yet, notwithstanding the authority of the Masoretic point, we venture to give this passage to the Bridegroom, and to interpret it as we have done : For thus it has an easy consistent sense, and is most suitable to the context.” “ Certainly, says A. B. p. 351, our translation cannot be right, that she should
 “ be

BRIDE.

6. “ O” fet me as a seal upon thine heart,
 “ that I may be ever in thy thoughts;”
 as a seal upon thine arm, [*153.] “ ever
 “ before thine eyes;” for love is strong
 as death, “ and” jealousy is cruel as
 the grave: The sparks thereof are sparks
 of fire, a most vehement flame.

BRIDEGROOM.

7. Many waters cannot quench love, nei-
 ther can the floods drown it: “ My kind-
 “ ness I will never remove from thee.”
 (Isa. LIV. 10. XLIX. 15, 16.) If a man
 would give all the substance of his house
 for

“ be born there. The eastern people eat, drink, and
 “ sleep under trees; but they do not bring forth their
 “ children there.” He reads, “ There she solemnly
 “ received a pledge that bare thee—the verb expresses
 “ energy; and it is receiving a pledge, not giving one,
 “ as appears by the places where the word occurs.”

* 153.—*seal upon thine arm*;] Jer. xxii. 24. Tho’ Co-
 niah—were the signet.

for love, it would be utterly contemned.

“How greatly beyond treasures do I

“then value thine affection.”

B R I D E.

8. “Thus encouraged, allow me, O thou

“kind and generous benefactor, to inter-

“cede for her who needs protection.”

We have a little sister, [*154.] whose breasts

are not yet grown : (“I call her *ours* ; for,

“being mine, thou wilt as such now re-

“gard her.”) What shall we do for our

sister, in the day when she shall be de-

manded “in marriage?” (See the Au-

thor.)

B R I D E-

*154. There is not an expression used here which can suppose the presence of the person spoken of, but the contrary. Yet A. B. p. 355, led by his new scheme, thinks otherwise, and gives what appears to me a most whimsical representation of this passage.

The latter part of this chapter, from verse 8. is the most difficult part of the Poem, as to the literal sense ; for as to the typical, it is plain enough. If any one can give a paraphrase more plain, and better suited to other parts of Scripture, they shall have my sincere thanks.

BRIDEGROOM.

9. If she be a wall, "framed for steadfastness and constancy," we will build upon her two towers of silver; "and in her an house shall flourish:" If she be a door, "faithfully to preserve, and rightly to dispense the treasures we shall entrust her with," we will inclose her with boards of cedar, "a building not liable to corruption." [* 155.]

BRIDE.

10. I am a wall [† 156.] "in thy esteem, O my beloved," and my breasts are towers,

* 155.—*not liable to corruption;*] "For we know, (says St Paul, 2 Cor. v. i. 2.) that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our house, which is from heaven."

† 156. For a woman to build up her house is a Scripture expression for raising a family; in which case she is the wall,

towers, “ where treasures are laid up in
 “ store :” Therefore was I in his eyes as
 one that found favour ; “ for not of my
 “ deserts, O virgins, my companions ; or
 “ for any thing that I possess, was I cho-
 “ sen to be the wife of his bosom.”

- II. “ Yet have I some portion, once cal-
 “ led mine own ; for” Solomon hath a
 vineyard [* 157.] in Baalhamon. He
 hath

wall, the foundation, &c. The breasts, as the source of
 nourishment, are in fact the support of the human race ;
 and with this circumstance of dignity are considered both
 by sacred and prophane authors. As the tower and wine-
 press, (speaking of the Church as a vineyard,) are men-
 tioned together, by Isaiah v. and by St Matthew and
 St Luke, it is probable that such a tower and wine-press
 are here meant ; and that the Bride’s comparison is not
 to the majestic height of a tower, as chap. vii. 4. nor to
 its awful appearance as an armory, chap. iv. 4. but to
 the wine-press contained in it, whence wine flows, as
 milk from the breasts.

* 156. Both the mention of the sister, and of the vine-
 yard may be thought objections to Pharaoh’s daughter be-
 ing the wife here spoken of : But if the whole scene is a
 poetical fiction, these parts of it may be so also ; the
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[* 158.] hath let out the vineyard to keepers; each one for the fruit thereof shall bring a thousand pieces of silver.

BRIDEGROOM.

12. My vineyard, "which alone I prize,"
which is mine; "my most valued trea-
"sure," is before me, "for it is thou."

X

BRIDE

sister may be the land of Egypt, for whom the Bride desires Solomon's protection; and the vineyard the town of Gezer, which Pharaoh gave his daughter. But conjectures of this sort are but idle. If the Bride was the daughter of an Hebrew Prince, her having a sister and a vineyard may be literally true; and yet the Poem a fiction still.

* 158. *Baal-hamon* is said to be a place of vineyards near *Jerusalem*. But it is not plain whether the vineyard here is to be understood of one belonging to Solomon, or of the Bride's vineyard now become his, as in the paraphrase. Besides, it is not certain that there was no other *Baal-hamon*. By the name one would expect it to lye in, or near *Egypt*, not in *Juda*, where the name in Solomon's time must have been abhorred. If a place was so named afterwards, it was probably by the idolatrous kings. A. B. who supposes *Gezer* to be the vineyard here

BRIDE *continues her Speech.*

To thee, O Solomon, a thousand, and
to those that keep the fruit thereof, two
hundred.

BRIDEGROOM.

13. O thou [*159.] that “now” dwellest
in the gardens, “partaker of all my joys,
“com-

here meant, says, p. 42. “It was a place of great con-
“quence;” and p. 32. from Reland, that it is supposed
to be the same with *Gadera* or *Gazera*, near *Joppa* or
Jamnia, a place abounding with springs. Page 34. he
places *Gadera* on the borders of the plain of *Ramah*—
extremely fertile.

*159.—*thou that dwellest:*] *Habitante des jardins*; the
word is confined to the Bride as much in the Hebrew
as it is in the French, by a feminine termination. I
have therefore followed the author in putting these
words into the mouth of the Bridegroom. If any think
them to belong to the Bride, they must connect them
with her speech thus: “O thou that dwellest in the gar-
“dens, (employed in rural toils or sports,) the compa-
“nions hearken to thy voice: but cause me also to hear
“it, that the end of the nuptial feast may not be the
“end of my happiness; make haste, &c.”

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“ compleatly my wedded wife,” the companions hearken to thy voice “ attentively : They must leave thee now, the “ nuptial solemnity being here concluded : But thou wilt” cause me “ still” to hear “ it, as oft as I joyfully return.”

B R I D E.

14. Away, [*160.] my love, “ let me not
“ longer detain thee ; tho’ sweet is thy
“ converse ;

* 160. The turn here given to the last verse I prefer, both on account of its conformity with the last verse of chapter second, and because of the moral it contains; that the wife should ever have a regard to her husband’s glory, in the performance of his duty, and the choice of every manly pursuit; and not suffer her affection to lay him under any unbecoming restraint. Or if we give it a contrary turn, suitable to Rev. xxii. 17. 20. “ And the “ Spirit and the Bride say, come—Even so come Lord “ Jesus;” we must read as in our translation; “ make “ haste, O my beloved, and be thou like, &c. but re- “ turn again to her, who will wait thy coming with im- “ patience, following mean while the humble duties of “ a wife.”

The day amongst the Hebrews ended at six in the evening; and consequently the seven days ended at that time
also,

“ converse ; pursue thy wonted employ-
 “ ments, and” be thou like the roe, or
 the young hart, upon the mountains of
 spices.

Having

also, when it was a proper season in those hot countries
 to go forth to the field.

The abrupt manner in which the Poem is begun and
 ended, suits the manners of the eastern nations : But as
 it seems odd to us, I have endeavoured in the Paraphrase
 to remove that objection, and plainly point out the con-
 clusion, which in our literal translation is not so evident,
 tho' certainly to be understood.

HAVING thus completed my design, as far as I am able, and set this first and finest of all Pastorals in a light more becoming its divine original, than any in which, as far as I can judge, it has yet been placed by commentators; the next thing should be to shew its typical and spiritual signification. But as this, with regard to many circumstances, has been already done, and as the author, to whom I am obliged for the chief of what I have wrote, gives us hopes of seeing such a work performed by himself, I shall not enter upon that part of the subject.

But there yet remains what I may call a practical sense, to be collected from both the former, which it is the duty of every one to attend to. Christ is a Bridegroom to the Church as a body: But he is so likewise to every individual in it; and every humble soul may truly say, “his left-hand is under my head, and his right does embrace me;” for his kind providence is as truly watching every moment over even the most undeserving of us all, as over the whole universe, which, extensive as it is, is still but as a grain of the
balance

balance in his sight. I am sensible the ideas and expressions of this book have been shamefully abused, and that the raptures of enthusiasm have been often as offensive to the majesty and purity of Almighty God, as the loose fallies of fancy, which wanton imaginations so freely delight in : But the abuse of a thing is not a reason for condemning it. Give me an heart capable of the tender sensations expressed in this book, and a mind untainted by vice, and unsullied by those ideas which lead towards it ; and such an one will read the Song of Solomon, not only without danger, but with great advantage, and find here, as in every part of the Sacred Writings, solid instruction. If we examine the lives of such as have been noted for enthusiastic flights, we shall find, that, if they have not lived in the practice of vice, (tho' too many of them have,) yet have they been persons of wild and wanton dispositions, careless of their conduct, and more careless of their conversation and studies, such as have had strong passions, and been only kept from indulging them by the restraints of conscience, fear, regard for reputation, or
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by having met with cruel disappointments : Such persons, when they take a turn to devotion, love God with the same sensual affections they were wont to feel for an human object, and find their own warm ideas in places of Scripture, where no such are really to be found : And tho' in all this they may not be absolutely criminal, yet are they too apt to deceive themselves and others. The love of God is not a sensible passion, nor to be judged of by the seeming pious affections which possess the imagination, and which sometimes with a pleasing transport agitate the whole frame. If you love me, keep my commandments, saith our blessed Saviour : And an excellent rule it is whereby to judge of the reality of our affections. But then, on the other side, let us not fancy we do this where there are no affections at all. To love the Lord with all the heart, with all the soul, with all the mind, is the first and great commandment, distinct from the love of our neighbour, which is but the second, tho' a necessary consequence of the other : It is a real indispensable duty. And one should think, when once we are told there is a God,

nature

nature itself should point out to us that we are bound to love him. Can we consider him as the source of wisdom and goodness, and not feel our hearts melt within us? Can we enjoy the blessings of his hands so continually bestowed, and not praise him with our hearts, as well as our tongues? Can we think of him as the source of happiness, and reflect on the reward set before us, and not earnestly wish to obtain the prize? Can we meditate on the mysteries of our redemption, call to mind what our blessed Lord hath done and suffered for us, and not be lost in love and admiration? Yet how few can bear witness that their hearts are thus affected? How many are there, who, born with a natural turn to benevolence, feel for their fellow-creatures, and often exercise great acts of kindness; but at the same time indulge vicious inclinations in other respects, or go on in an indolent neglect of every religious duty? Do such truly love their Creator, their great Benefactor, the source of joy and happiness, in whom they live and move, and have their being; but towards whom they scarce ever lift up their thoughts or desires? Ask any of these

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these whether they would not be content to give up the hopes of heaven, if they could be secure of an easy life, a quiet death, and no future reckoning? Is this to love God? Should he from heaven, by an audible voice, as he now does by the gospel, require of every man to take up the cross, and follow their Saviour through this short life, which is but for a moment, with a promise of eternal happiness in the enjoyment of himself; how few would willingly accept the offer? Let each one ask his own heart, and return a sincere honest reply; is this to love God? Consider that this short life, and but a small portion of that, is the only space in which we may exert the freedom of our wills, and do somewhat to express our gratitude to him, whose benefits we every moment enjoy: And yet it is pain to us ever to turn our thoughts that way. And can we say we love God? Let us then purify our hearts, and be diligent in good works; but still with pleasure let us turn our eyes towards him who made us, and freely say, "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, "where thou makest thy flock to rest," that

I may find comfort with thee from the cares of this mortal life. "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth;" let him, whom I worship as my God, who has sealed the hope of pardon to my soul, whose merciful condescension has raised me from my humble state, has spoken peace, eternal peace unto me; let him be still the guide of my life, and my whole confidence be placed in his kind undeserved protection.

But I am not intending to give a devotional paraphrase of the whole book, I would only point out some few of the useful instructions contained in it. Michaelis, as quoted by the author, tho' he seems to controvert the received opinion of this Poem's being a sacred allegory, and is inclined to look no farther than the literal meaning, yet allows it to be a production not unworthy the celestial muse; and thinks it was inserted in the great Code of sacred and moral truths, to shew that the chaste fervours of wedded love have the express approbation of the Deity; and to obviate the mistakes of such morose bigots as hold conjugal love inconsistent with the love of God.

Marriage,

Marriage, however it has been abused, and however it is now ridiculed, was instituted by God himself, and that in the state of innocence ; and from this book we learn what purity, what chastity is required in those who would live in it according to the ordinance of God, and the dictates of nature ; which, for wise reasons, has placed in men stronger passions and appetites than in the other sex ; [* 160.] and it is required of both to be guided [† 161.] by the rules of reason and the laws of God in all things.

The married state, in its original institution, was intended to be the source of every joy in life, the bond of society, the comfort of all our cares. What so endearing as the name of parent, husband, brother, child ? What so entire, as ought to be the friendship of two persons, whom sympathy has joined, whose interests are inseparable, who must share in each others

* 160. For heaven made man to win, and woman to be won. WESLEY.

† 161. " Whether you eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God ;" *i. e.* according to his laws. 1 Cor. x. 31.

Others joys and sorrows, especially where children, (the dearest objects of these,) are equally dear to both? What is more likely to keep up affection than a long continued intercourse of mutual obligations? And what is there more frequently alluded to in this book? The Bride is ever acknowledging the kind condescension of her lord, in chusing her amongst all others; in raising her, an humble shepherdess, to be his wife; in sharing with her the joys of his palace, in encouraging and supporting her weakness, and kindly passing by the failings occasioned by excess of modesty, or excess of love; and she endeavours to make every return in her power. She sets us an example of humility, by declining the praises offered her, and by the frequent acknowledging her unworthiness; she teaches us meekness by her gentle speeches, and her patient enduring the injuries she receives; she shews her diligence to please her husband, and her tender affection and esteem, by her care to seek him when absent, and her earnest desire of his conversation and instruction: She teaches us to be grateful by her repeated expressions

pressions of gratitude ; to love, by every word and action ; she shews an innocent artless behaviour, an unreserved confidence in the care and protection of the Bridegroom, a generous unconcern for every blessing but his friendship ; and yet a benevolent care of others in the circumstance of the supposed sister ; and her filial piety appears in that little which is said concerning her mother, whose love to her, and her own confidence and dependence are plainly expressed. Her fortitude and willing disposition for a laborious life are seen in the account of her past sufferings, and in her continuing to take the care of a flock of kids, and that even in the heat of the day. And lastly, her earnest care for the reputation and honour of her lord, is, I think, pointed out in the last verse, as well as in her foregoing praises of him.

The Bridegroom's character is not so fully given, nor indeed could it with propriety be carried as far. The praises of the Bride set forth his personal accomplishments. His kindness and condescension to her is expressed in every line, but still mixed with great dignity ;
and

and the delicacy of sentiment that is seen in every word and action, complete his amiable character.

To sum up all, take the following description of both in French, which I shall not translate, not being able to give the same turn to the expressions in our own language; but I have said the same already in other words above.

Sur le CANTIQUE de CANTIQUES.

Qu'on se représente une jeune vierge, élevée dans l'humilité, la piété, la crainte de Dieu, et dans un vie laborieuse; qu'une elle, comptant pour peu les attraits de sa personne, les avantages de sa naissance, les richesses, les plaisirs, les titres de noblesse; bien instruite que la marriage est un état de dépendance, de sujétion, dans lequel on perd bientôt la beauté, et souvent la santé même; exposé aux douleurs les plus vifs, aux soins les plus cuisans; plein de devoirs pénibles, que l'amour seul peut rendre légers; qu'une telle personne, dije, touchée d'un amour chaste pour un digne objet, qu'elle estime jusqu'à la vénération,

tion, renonce a tout, pour se mettre sous sa protection, a fin d'y trouver un guide, un soutien, un aide, et un conducteur dans la voye du salut : Telle est le Epouse du Cantique ; et tels devons nous etre envers Jesus Christ.

Qu'elle trouve en celui qu'elle aime, une tendresse affectueuse, une generosité sans bornes ; une attention continuelle a la perfectionner, a l'instruire, a la soutenir, a l'encourager ; une douceur parfaite pour supporter ses infirmités ; un courage intrepide pour la defendre ; un desinteressement parfait a l'egard de ses propres interets, un empressement a chercher son bonheur, au depens meme de son propre repos : Tel est l'Epoux du Cantique, et tel est notre divin Maitre.

F I N I S.



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